

SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

By MANMOHAN GHOSE

Author of Love Songs and Elegies

Edited with an Introduction

By LAURENCE BINYON

BASIL BLACKWELL
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Introductory Memoir

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun !

THESE words, spoken as if from some spontaneous compulsion in a voice low and thrilled that itself seemed to glow, caused all the class of school-boys to turn their heads. At the back of the room, behind the rest, sat a young Indian with thick hair falling about his forehead, and dark lustrous eyes. It was he who had startled us with his impassioned tones. Where had he come from ? How had he mysteriously joined us ? Perhaps I deceive myself, but to my memory this was my first sight of Manmohan Ghose—an unaccountable apparition from an unknown hemisphere. The legendary East seemed suddenly to have projected a fragment of itself into our little world of everyday things and humdrum studies, disturbing it with colour, mystery, romance. No doubt I should not have been moved as I was had not the new-comer spoken the rich lines in a voice that betrayed the capacity to be intoxicated by poetry : and of such capacity I had found no trace in my classmates. I felt immediate sympathy, and besides anyone foreign who brought a breath from a world outside the world of habit ever attracted me.

It must not be supposed that the words of Shakespeare were spoken out “of the blue,” deliberately challenging an interval of silence. They came with startling

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aptness, but they came in response to a question. The school was St Paul's, then lately removed from its ancient quarters in the City, which I myself still perversely lamented, for what amplitude of play-fields could make up for those solitary rambles about the by-ways of Cheapside, the towers and spires, the shipping in the Thames, the crowds and animation, the sense of history, of being in the centre of things, the deep-toned bells of the Cathedral sounding down the smoky air, the little seclusions of peace in the churchyard, the glory of the spaciousness beneath the dome? These had been my dreamy haunts. We had been transferred to Hammersmith and prose. I was then in the seventh form, under the Sur-Master, Mr Lupton, who on this occasion was reading with us the *Æneid*. With the perhaps laudable aim of enlarging our vocabulary, he would press upon our reluctant or apathetic taste a choice of poetical epithets, such as Tennyson (whom, like everybody among our elders, so far as my experience went, he idolised) would employ to dress up his thoughts in. Thus we were enjoined to speak of steeds rather than horses, not a sword, but a falchion, and on this particular occasion he suggested that livery might be a more sumptuous, Virgilian word than clothes or dress. Could not one of us recall such a use of the word in our classics? He paused for a reply, expecting no doubt that, as usually happened, he would be reduced to supplying the apt quotation himself. But the reply came, and I think he was just a little disconcerted when the Prince of Morocco's appeal vibrated with such intensity of tone through the silent and astonished class room. Its dramatic emotion was something un-English! We were not used to such things.

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Manmohan Ghose and I made friends, and by degrees disclosed to each other our secret ambitions. We had long walks and talks together, discussing everything in heaven and earth, after the manner of youth, but especially poetry and the poets. My home was indifferent to the arts, my school fellows also, so far as I knew them: and it was a delight to expand in these talks on the subjects I cared for most. We had enough difference of taste to salt our conversation with arguments and dispute. At that time I was in the stage of an ardent worship of Browning, but I think he never shared this enthusiasm.

He lived in lodgings with two brothers, but what his actual circumstances were when he came to England, and how he came to be at St Paul's, I do not think I ever inquired. As to the School, the High Master, a notable and formidable personality famous for his prescience in judging of a boy's future capabilities, would at times, for his own reasons, insert a promising pupil into one of the upper forms without notice, and in the middle of the term. Hence my unconsciousness of having ever set eyes on Manmohan Ghose till all our heads were turned to the strange new-comer on that particular morning is not so improbable as it may seem. But of Ghose's background I knew scarcely anything. His enthusiasm for literature sufficed my curiosity. He was well read in the English poets, better read than I in the Elizabethans and the older lyrists. But what struck me most was his enthusiastic appreciation of Greek poetry, not so much the books prescribed in the school as those which he had sought out on his own account. Theocritus, Meleager, above all Simonides, were his special favourites. I had imagined that an

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Oriental's taste must of necessity be for the luxuriant and ornate, and was surprised that he should feel so strong an attraction to the limpid and severe. Yet many of us are attracted to arts and literatures remote from our own traditions and just because of qualities in them which these have not. Why should not an Indian feel a parallel attraction? Manmohan Ghose never forgot the Greeks, and to the end his delight was in European literature and European art.

I still remember the pleasure I had when he showed me this little poem: an echo from the Greek, but made his own.

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,
Birds fly with music in their wings,
And from the blue rough sea
The fishes flash and leap;
There is a life of loveliest things
O'er thee so fast asleep.

In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier
Eve after eve, and still
The glorious stars remember to appear,
The roses on the hill
Are fragrant as before,
Only thy face of all that's dear
I shall see never more.

Though not such a brilliant scholar as his younger brother, Arabinda, who has become famous in other fields than the classics, Manmohan won an open scholarship at Christ Church and went up to Oxford in 1887. I remained at school for another year. He had rooms in Peckwater Quad, at the top of his staircase: and

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there, on my going up to Trinity, I would find him sitting over the fire with a book, ever ready for animated discussion, which a friend from his own college would sometimes come in to join. I suppose he subsisted on an allowance, but he seemed to float in an atmosphere to which material things were strange. One day at the beginning of the term he called on me to borrow a postage stamp, in order to write home for funds which he had forgotten. He had arrived in Oxford with a florin and some coppers on which to start the term, and having given the florin by mistake to a porter, he had nothing but twopence to give the driver of his hansom on alighting at Tom Tower. He explained this to the cabman with some philosophic consolations, which left him too astonished to expostulate.

I recall an evening in the rooms of Percy Dearmer, at Christ Church, when there was a large gathering, chiefly to entertain some members of Frank Benson's Company, who were acting at the theatre. My cousin, Stephen Phillips, then remarkably handsome, was one of them. Lionel Johnson, curiously small and neat, was there; and his nervous mouth, the pallor of his face, the intent eyes, as of one who never slept, the air of dominating intellect and learning combined with the extreme youthfulness of his person, made a singular impression. And I can still hear Manmohan Ghose standing up to read a poem in the crowded room; his long hair fell half over his eyes; as he read he detached one of his dark locks, and pulled at it with outstretched hand: oblivious of his surroundings, lost in the poem, he appeared almost convulsed in the emotional effort of its delivery.

In the summer term of 1890 Mr Blackwell published

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a little volume bound in brown paper for which Selwyn Image had made an exquisite design. It was called *Primavera*, and was the joint production of Stephen Phillips, Manmohan Ghose, Arthur Cripps, of Trinity, and myself. It was received with the indulgence often accorded to such youthful efforts, and was soon in a second edition.

Addington Symonds reviewed us kindly and, at length, in the *Academy* Oscar Wilde in the *Pall Mall Gazette* was no less favourable, and had particular praise for the "young Indian of brilliant scholarship and high literary attainment who gives some culture to Christ Church" Mr Ghose, he said, ought some day to make a name in our literature Not long after this, I think, Ghose went down to live in London As we were at different colleges, and were not of the same year, I had seen much less of him at Oxford than at school, and now for some time he was largely lost to view, for my home was in the country We exchanged poems and criticisms, and on visits to London I met him in company with artists and men of letters, whom he had come to know through Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, and others of our contemporaries. At one time he thought of seeking a post of some kind in England, but nothing came of such projects. Not all his time was spent in London, he knew something of the more beautiful parts of England and of Wales, and cherished the memory of them Yet he could not forget that he was an exile.

Heaven be in thy sails, O unknown vessel,
Till those heavenly shores grow into view,
See my spirit, with no storm to wrestle,
Follows, goes on wind-wings thither too.

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For long miles into the heart of morning,
Miles and miles, far over land and seas,
Past enchanted regions of forewarning,
Dawns at last the land that dims all these.

So he cried in a poem written in these last years before leaving England for ever Alas! it was not long before he was to feel that his spirit had exchanged one exile for another. During the last year of this period, being now settled in London, I saw him frequently. He was unoccupied, I think, except for verse-making, and would drift into my room at odd hours, and stay talking till late into the night.

The ship which in the autumn of 1894 bore Manmohan Ghose down the Thames estuary and the Channel on his journey home was named, I recall, *Patroclus*. It seems traditional with ship-builders to christen their grimy-funnelled iron monsters with such legendary names. But in this case there seemed something symbolic in the attachment of a name, breathing of bright Hellas and the Tale of Troy, to the efficient product of a practical civilisation made with sole thought of use and comfort. There went gliding the big liner, a prodigious piece of throbbing mechanism, the modern West's achievement and pride; painted on her bows was a relic of old poetry and lettered tradition, just as our restless civilisation still carries with it, hoarded in a few brains, cherished in a few imaginations, the heritage of Greece, no more to the multitude than a painted name with the dimmest of associations, and on board was an Indian poet, to whom the *Iliad* and the name of Achilles' friend meant more perhaps than to any of his English co-voyagers; a young Indian returning

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to an unknown home, for whom the English cliffs and the roar of London and the whole hurried stream of western life were inextricably to be mingled in memory with the glory of the classics of Europe.

“ I arrived on October 25th, and have since been staying at a beautiful country place called Bardyanath, in my grandfather's house, all among the mountains and green sugar-cane fields and shallow rivers. My own people I found charming and cultivated folk, and spent an extremely pleasant time among them. This, I think very fortunate indeed—to find at once friends, and that of one's own blood, so congenial and interesting as soon as I landed ”

Such was Manmohan's first happy impression, on his return to his own country. The one drawback he lamented was that he had forgotten his own tongue, Bengali, and had to learn it afresh. But I imagine that all his life he thought in English. He soon obtained a post as Professor of English Literature at Patna College. It was dull, fatiguing, ill-paid work. His consolation was in the country and the climate. A letter of the following year speaks for itself

“ We have a few holidays, for the festival in honour of the Goddess Durga. Hinduism is a curious thing. I never realised what mediaeval Europe was like till I came to India. It stirs a strange curiosity in one to live surrounded by these morbid and corroding superstitions. Autumn and the rains are nearly over, with a sky washed for the light to revel in. The seasons, at any rate, are forever beautiful, in spite of man and his diseases. After the parching heat of June and the delicious rain of August, the earth seems possessed with a passion for verdure. It is like April in England, only

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more wonderful. Green things are indeed wonderful here, but brown things (that is, man!) are absurdly out of sympathy with me, at least socially from the outside, I confess they are full of interest, so that in the midst of all this plenitude of bloom, I often remember dingy London and then

Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat”

From a letter of 1896 :

“ Yes, the pestilence we had here in early summer was truly dreadful. I used to walk out to the Ganges at dusk, when college was over, to escape from the hot city and breathe the pure almost mountain-sweet air that comes across such a vast sheet of water. But it was vain to seek escape from men and mortality. Here all along the softly washing banks of the river, a myriad fires appeared in the summer night, where the dead bodies were being burnt—lovely flames in the distance, merely, if you could but stop yourself from approaching them. Near at hand, it was indescribably tragic and wonderful; groups of figures in the darkness, luridly revealed or in shadow, men standing in a dreadful silence, women hanging passionately over the dead or shrilly wailing, the swathed white corpses on the ground, some lifting them on the pyre, others applying the torch—every variety of attitude that expresses grief, desolation and despair.”

In February, 1897 (he had now been transferred from Patna), he writes : “ You ask how I like Calcutta. All peopled places are wonderful, and this not the least so. After the silence of Bankipore, there is a little stir here—a rumour of some great world beyond the moon, and ship-

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masts in the river. One of my pupils (Indian boys are most imaginative) goes down every morning with me to see those wonderful ship-masts, and his eyes light with ecstasy at the magic sound of Europe! The vast river too has followed me here, as broad and shining as ever. Often I go at day-break to stand and see the sun rise out of mist and water, drinking the silence of the fresh air, the divine earliness of morning, ἡώς ἡριγένεια. But then, too, I get tired of all this, and long insatiably for some intellectual excitement, to have someone to talk about poetry with. There are people, of course, and plenty of charming enthusiasm (I have never been amongst a race so sensitive to poetry), but there is no true understanding of things "

"The magic sound of Europe! "

Sharp indeed was the contrast between this strange land which was yet his own, and the western country of his memories, still so recent. England had given him much, and to the best she had to give a singularly receptive spirit had responded with delight. Her poetry glorified England for this stranger from the East. Was her last gift to be the cruel gift of estrangement from his people? No doubt with passing years he grew to be more at home in Indian life he made it one of his objects: but for long there were frequent moments of keen repining

Yet after all he was Indian in his nature. His verse follows the forms and traditions of English poetry, but his temperament and attitude were Eastern. Physically he responded joyfully to the congenial ardour of the Indian climate. What a glorious pleasure the sun, and the heat of the sun! He revelled in the floods of sunlight, the luxuriant leafiness. The country itself was

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full of charm and romance; he loved the primeval simplicity of the people and their life. Only he remained outside it. Mentally, he was torn in two. I often urged him to take a theme from Indian legend, and he attempted a poem on Savitri among other Indian subjects. But it would not shape itself. He felt the need to Europeanise the atmosphere in some sort, and then the essence evaporated. Thus he hovered between two hemispheres, not wholly belonging to either.

. In one respect, in his acceptance of tradition, he was certainly more Oriental than Western. I had given him at parting Bullen's *Lyrics from the Elizabethan Song Books*, and he found in these, and in Campion especially, an unceasing delight. "How we have sacrificed form and expression in our devotion for modern thought and for contemporary subject matter, and the idea that a poet should have something new to say! How did people first come to have this idea? The Elizabethans don't seem to trouble themselves much about having a new poetical mission. What old and time-worn subjects they chose, seeming evidently to care for nothing except for rhythm and expression, on which they spend the whole power of their art."

Love Songs and Elegies by Manmohan Ghose appeared in 1898 in Mr. Elkin Mathew's *Shilling Garland*. This little book was all that he was to publish except some occasional poems in magazines. He was now at Dacca where he was professor for some five years. Then for a time (from 1902) he was promoted Inspector of Schools and travelled about his district of Chota Nagpore. One of his letters described with some humour long uncomfortable journeys in remote parts of the district—journeys by night in an ox-cart in which he lay jolted

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and full of apprehension of tigers, and turned out shivering in the morning to examine a squad of children under a hedge in Tennyson's "Princess," a poem he disliked. Did the ghost of Lord Macaulay smile complacently on that incongruous scene?

Finally, Ghose was appointed professor at Presidency College, Calcutta. Our correspondence had lapsed. For many years I heard nothing from him. I knew that he was married; I learnt later, that his wife was an invalid.

At last, during the war, he wrote. I then learnt the full tragedy that had befallen him. The beautiful and happy-natured wife, whom he worshipped with an extreme devotion, had been stricken ten years before with a mysterious nervous ailment, completely depriving her of speech, paralysing her right limbs and causing aversion from all food. For a space of five years there was a partial recovery, then the malady which was combined with hysteric symptoms resumed its mastery. Day after day till the release of death, Manmohan's entire life was divided between his college lecture-room and the sick-room, where he devoted himself with unending patience to attending on the beloved sufferer. The prolonged nervous strain resulted in utter fatigue, utter despondency, and finally broke his health. The renunciation of all society prevented any compensating distraction. "For years not a friendly step has crossed my threshold. With English people in India there can be only a nodding acquaintance or official connection, and with Indians my purely English upbringing and breeding puts me out of harmony, denationalised, that is their word for me."

Love, harmony, happiness, he had found; home had

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become home at last , and then, in so brief a space, this had been taken from him.

Poetry and his children—two daughters—were his consolation. He continued to write, though he never cared to publish. Apart from his fellows, knowing little of the currents of contemporary literature, with no help from friendly criticism, he wrote verse which sometimes showed little signs of his isolation, in being out of touch with the most exacting standards. A tendency to become obscure from grammatical inversion, to indulge in a certain prolixity, occasional failure to cope with elaborate rhyme-structure—but he would set himself tasks in intricate and dissyllabic rhyming which would have daunted most English poets—these blemishes might easily have disappeared in revision which he did not live to make. The devotion of his love for his wife, the desolation of his loss, inspired the groups of poems called “Immortal Eve” and “Orphic Mysteries,” containing the finest and most original of his lyrics.

During all these heavily burdened years he never relaxed for a moment in his duties as a professor. His habitual reserve and aloofness caused him to be regarded by strangers as cold and austere; in reality, as those few who came to know him in his home discovered, he was simple, natural, affectionate and sympathetic. But he did not invite familiarity. To his pupils he seemed always to breathe a world of his own. They admired him from afar as he emerged from a mysterious seclusion and spoke, not as if to them, but to some ideal audience. It was as if they overheard his soliloquies. Those who were not in his class passionately envied those who were. All testify to the extraordinary fascination of his

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lectures. His mere voice, as he read or recited poetry, took them with a spell. His powers came not so much from the felicity of his phrasing as from the entire faith he had in what he held up for admiration, his possession by its beauty. "If the highest test of a teacher," writes one ex-pupil, "be to create an attitude of mind, then Ghose was the teacher par excellence." Another writes that he would cherish his memory even more as a creative teacher than as a poet and scholar.

To hundreds and hundreds of young Indians he opened a magic door away from the class-rooms and text-books, and through him they heard the poets of our country speak as with living voices.

In 1918 Ghose's health, broken by the shock of his wife's death, failed completely. Repeated illnesses were followed by a gradual loss of eye-sight. One of his keenest pleasures was in pictures and sculpture. In the earlier years after his return to India, he had spent much of his savings on photographs and books of reproductions which I sent him from Italy or London. He would spend happy evenings contemplating them. But now these, and the beauty of the sky and flowers, were taken from him. In 1921 he was obliged to retire. For years he had been looking forward to freedom from the irksome routine of his profession, in order to write at ease. Even now, blinded, broken in health, and prematurely aged, he remained courageous and serene. He continued to compose poetry, and he looked forward to accomplishing a cherished dream of returning to England, the beloved nurse of his youth. His passage was taken for a date in March, 1924. But on January 4th he died. As he lay dying "Lear" and "Macbeth"

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were read aloud to him at his own desire. He was not yet fifty-five

Would Manmohan Ghose have achieved more if he had been a purely Indian poet—if his father, with a whole-hearted faith in western culture, had not transplanted him to England at the tender age of seven, so that all his most impressionable years were spent in a foreign country? Perhaps; for on his return to India he wrote English verse in surroundings from which they drew no natural nourishment, and his isolation hampered him. He began a drama on the story of Nala and Damayanti, which was never finished; but otherwise his poems were little concerned with India. They are full of English imagery, of the trees and flowers of England. Circumstances had prevented him from being like Rabindra Nath Tagore, an interpreter to the West of Indian thought and life. But at least he was an eloquent interpreter of the West to India. He admired the Bengali language, but it seemed to him lacking in a certain quality which he found in English. No Indian had ever before used our tongue with so poetic a touch, and he would coin a phrase, turn a noun into a verb with the freedom, often the felicity, of our own poets. But he remains Indian. I do not think that an Indian reader would feel him as a foreign poet, for all his western tastes and allusions. Yet to us he is a voice among the great company of English singers; somewhat apart and solitary, with a difference in his note, but not an echo. I hope that fate, so malignant to him in his life-time, may not pursue him after death with the hasty and cheap criticism that his verse is neither Indian nor English, and so dismiss it. On the contrary, it is both Indian and English, that is its interest. We English, ready

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enough to adorn with haloes of romance any country not our own that is sufficiently far off, are apt to feel embarrassed and incredulous if a like tribute is offered to our own land. But why this coyness? We are vain of our efficiency in business and administration, and parade it before the Eastern world. Is it not something for pride also that England could be to this Indian a nursing-mother of imagination and the dear home of the Muses? Yet with English people I fancy that the Orientalism of a Flecker or a Lafcadio Hearn finds much readier sympathy than the romantic admiration of England that inspired Manmohan Ghose. I remember that I myself was quite annoyed with him for persisting in choosing a Greek legend, Perseus, for the subject of a long poem rather than an Indian one. How unreasonable this was! I should not have been annoyed with myself for wanting to write a poem on Savitri or Nala and Damayanti. Let us become acquainted with the riches of India's tradition by all means, but let us make exchange of our own best also, and regard with sympathy the effort of one like Ghose, for whom England was above all the country of immortal poets. Oscar Wilde wrote of his early poems. "His verses show how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the Oriental mind, and suggest how close is the bond of union that may some day bind India to us by other methods than those of commerce and military strength!" Was this a fond aspiration? Not so fond as the delusions of those who think only in terms of politics and business.

I think of Manmohan Ghose as I first saw him breaking the silence of our class-room with his fervent Shakespearean appeal; I think of his isolation in his own country, dazzled by the glory of its sky, but restless

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with cravings of the mind ; of his strange, doubly-exiled lot ; of the tragic succession of disappointments and disasters that befell him , above all of his unfaltering fidelity to a chosen ideal, his inner secret of serenity and fortitude, and I remember the lines in the *Poet's Epitaph* :

He is retired as noonday dew
Or fountain in a noonday grove ,
And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love

LAURENCE BINYON.

EARLY POEMS

EARLY POEMS

Myvanwy

Oft hast thou heard it, that old true saying,
'Tis like and unlike makes the happiest music
Then, gravely smiling, scorn me not, Myvanwy,
 Fairest of maidens !

Thou who in sunlight sittest, pensive leaning
At the open window, thy hand deep-buried
In dark sweet clusters of thy hair, and gazest
 O'er the wide ocean

Yes, o'er that ocean far, far in the distance,
Is my own country, and other soil bore me
Than thy dear birthplace, other sun than England's
 Nourished my spirit

Yet for this slight not my heart as alien .
What can green England show to match those regions
Save thyself only, what hath she that merits
 Prouder remembrance ?

Nothing ! nor any shore that hears the Ocean,
Nothing can match their beauty ! If Myvanwy
Had but an exile's sad heart in her bosom,
 She too would say so.

She too would say so, and back in thought returning,
How would her sweet eyes fill with tears of gladness,
How would she marvel, the lovely maiden,
 Breathless with gazing !

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There, stretching lonely, do the giant mountains
Rise with their ages of snows to heaven,
Snows, the heart shudders, so far away seem they,
Fearfully lovely,

There is the tall palm, like her own dear stature,
The land's green lady, and riotously hang there,
All for Myvanwy's lips, the strange, delicious
Fruits of the tropics ;

And the vast elephant that dreams for ages,
Lost among dim leaves and things of old, remembers :
Would he not, rousing at her name's sweet rumour,
Pace to behold her ?

O me, what glories would her eyes enkindle,
Eyes with their quick imaginative rapture!
How shall I picture to her all the strangeness,
All the enchantment,

In that enchanted land of noon ? My heart faints
And my tongue falters : For long ago, Myvanwy,
Deep in the east where now but evening gathers,
Lost is my country.

Long ago hither in passionate boyhood,
Lightly an exile, lightly leagues I wandered
Over the bitter foam, so far Fate led me
Only to love thee.

EARLY POEMS

Lost is that country, and all-but forgotten
Mid these chill breezes, yet still, oh, believe me,
All her meridian suns and ardent summers
 Burn in my bosom.

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Myvanwy in the Woods

Virgin darkness, wet and deep,
Where dwells but April, dwells but sleep,
What presence clear,
Like a beam has entered here?
What loved footsteps, that the trees
Freshen their soliloquies,
Birds break into louder lays,
All fair nature's heart runs wild
To remember her sweet child?
In the wood Myvanwy strays

O what gladness thrills her through
Her wayward darling back to woo
From life again,
Thought and passion, stir and men!
Clasp her now from that great lure,
O sweet nature, clasp her sure!
Where no alien eye perceives,
Lead her, where dim brooks have birth,
Fill her with the smell of earth,
Sheet her in a thousand leaves!

Bloom in foliage like the flowers,
Myvanwy, to that world of ours,
Of throng and street,
How strayed in your vernal feet?
There, where not a daisy smiles,
There, where green earth's pale exiles
Toil and toil and never cease!

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Who is this ? the passer said ;
Rustic grass was in your tread,
In your laughter the wild breeze.

Ah ! no gift of heath to city,
It was love led you, love and pity,
To my sad heart,
Child, your rapture to impart.
Me, fast-bound like wintry earth,
Your intoxicating mirth
Loosed, and rained delightful showers,
Showed me where their song birds borrow,—
All the uselessness of sorrow,
All the joy of April flowers.

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London

Farewell, sweetest country , out of my heart, you roses,
Wayside roses, nodding, the slow traveller to keep
Too long have I drowsed alone in the meadows deep,
Too long alone endured the silence Nature espouses.
Oh, the rush, the rapture of life! throngs, lights, houses,
This is London. I wake as a sentinel from sleep.

Stunned with the fresh thunder, the harsh delightful
noises,
I move entranced on the thronging pavement. How
sweet,
To eyes sated with green, the dusty brick-walled street!
And the lone spirit, of self so weary, how it rejoices
To be lost in others, bathed in the tones of human voices,
And feel hurried along the happy tread of feet.

And a sense of vast sympathy my heart almost crazes,
The warmth of kindred hearts in thousands beating
with mine.
Each fresh face, each figure, my spirit drinks like wine,—
Thousands endlessly passing Violets, daisies,
What is your charm to the passionate charm of faces,
This ravishing reality, this earthliness divine ?

O murmur of men more sweet than all the wood's
caresses,
How sweet only to be an unknown leaf that sings
In the forest of life! Cease, Nature, thy whisperings.
Can I talk with leaves, or fall in love with breezes ?
Beautiful boughs, your shade not a human pang appeases
This is London I lie, and twine in the roots of things.

EARLY POEMS

The Old Sweet Quiet

Where art thou, my old sweet Quiet,
Where, O where ?
By the billows canst thou be ?
Is it there ?
There, where hushed from wild waves' riot
Breaks the smoothed blue sea ?
No, not there ! The peaceful moon
By those falling waves would stir
With the far, far distance soon
Longings infinite for her ;
Her, that from my heart can purge
Not a billow, not a surge
No, not there !

Art thou in the cornfields lonely ?
Oh, to be
Where the wide earth ripples green
Like a sea !
There, possessed of verdure only,
Watching dost thou lean ?
No ! not there, for thou wouldst meet
By some stile, some hedgerow fair,
Sweet objects, ah ! too keenly sweet
With the memory of her ,
Her, that from their perfume knows
Not a woodbine, not a rose !
No, not there !

EARLY POEMS

To His Mother

Augustest! dearest! whom no thought can trace,
Name murmuring out of birth's infinity,
Mother! like heaven's great face is thy sweet face,
Stupendous with the mystery of me
Eyes, elder than the light, cheek, that no flower
Remembers; brow, at which my infant care
Gazed weeping up and saw the skies enshower
With tender rain of vast mysterious hair!
Thou at whose breast the sunbeams sucked, whose arms
Cradled the lispig ocean, art thou she,
Goddess, at whose dim heart the world's deep charms
Tears, terrors, sobbing things, were yet to be?
She, from whose tearing pangs in glory first
I and the infinite white heavens burst?

Home-Thoughts

While I recall you o'er deep parting seas,
Lonelier have grown these cliffs, this English grass.
Haunt of my heart, dear faces, let me pass
To that far south, till presence bring me peace.
Unsatisfied with those dead memories,
I muse, and mould from each sweet day that was
An image of the future; but, alas!
What hunger can oblivious hope appease?

My soul may travel to you, but the sea
Sternly puts back the pilgrim feet of life
With the harsh warning of necessity;—
That oft-taught truth my sighs would fain unlearn,
How idle is human passion! Yet its strife
Is duty, and our hearts are made to yearn.

EARLY POEMS

An Elegy

Nor spring, nor bloom, nor freshness!—O come thou!
Bloom, verdure, springtime, all things, call thee now.
Not of the moon so wistful is the sea
As sea and moon and earth and air of thee!

The hollow, silent world, now thou art gone,
Like music of thy laughter vibrates on,
As silence after music, oh, so sweet
Thy name is now for absence to repeat.

Ah! dearer than the dart of all delight,
Ah! swifter than fresh beauty to the sight,
Comes thy lost cheek to kiss of summer days,
And to the gazing stars thy starry gaze.

Come thou! The very air, that aches to be
Void of thy bloom, is bending over thee.
It is of thee the violet breathes replete;
Remembering thee, the rose is straightway sweet.

And my dream-burdened spirit, full to death,—
Ah! just behind the rose I feel thy breath!
Thou seemest through the sweet saps just to start;
Through the green leaves thou comest in my heart.

Oh, she is gone? she never may return,—
Past greenest leaves in Summer's heart to burn,
Past dew or flower, or dreams, or surges' lull,
To lie in deepest nature beautiful.

EARLY POEMS

The Lover and the Painter

O painter bold and true, lord of every flying hue,
Whose immortal hand all lovely things implore,
Now to thy glory set, what never artist yet

Dared before :

Paint a picture of the mistress I adore !

What voice of earth is this, that passionate with bliss
Calls me from the coldness of serenest art ?

Youth, thy happy eyes I know, I recognise :

Say what part

Can Apelles play to serve a lover's heart ?

To give sighs memory, shadows reality,
All the hungry hours with gazing awe to slay,
Quick, oh, quick, deceive time and absence, give

To the day

Beauty, night but shows only to take away.

Impossible ! no stretch of utmost skill can fetch
That fair invisible in colours to confine
How shall pencil trace unhelped her holy grace ?

How divine

Lids of what sweet curve, what lips incarnadine ?

Nay ! do but see, the room is startled with her bloom ;
A thousand shadows fill the haunted atmosphere ,
Birds in the tree-tops calm are shrilling of her charm :

Do but hear,

Love's own graphic voice shall paint her to thine ear.

EARLY POEMS

Speak, then, and let thy fire my duller hand inspire.
What ambrosial hair, O lover, must I paint ?
What divinest gold fetched from sacred brows of old
For thy saint,
Helen's or Berenice's ? Come, I shall not faint.

Not Helen's, nor that hung streaming the stars among ;
Only paint for me the tresses of a girl ;
Tresses dear and deep, tresses soft as sleep—
Not a curl
But for its loveliness would impoverish the pearl.

What darling locks are these that dim the very breeze,
Incomparable painter, with their shower ?
Yet, ah ! yet once more this ringlet I implore ;
Every flower
Just as she places it in some sweet careless hour !

From your rapturous tones where love himself enthrones,
Charming youth, I caught these touches of her grace.
Turn now your sparkling eyes, oh, now my soul advise !
See I trace—
Venus help me now ! her unknown heavenly face.

Outlines, lovely, vague, my haunted spirit plague.
What suggestions dim and sweet they breed !
Shadows gather thick, and my heart beats quick :
O proceed !
From the canvas now let dawn her face indeed.

See, unclouding clear, her very face appear ;
Bloom ineffable, no sun-warm peach can show.

EARLY POEMS

Are these the glorious eyes that did your heart surprise
Long ago ?

This the ruby lip, your sighs remember so ?

Not this, not this! Her face, O painter, couldst thou
trace,

Painter, her beauty immortal, sweet, severe,
Thy ravished soul in bliss beyond the morning's kiss
'Twould inspire!—

O intoxicated lover, let me hear.

If cold and perfect art could love's burning heart
Borrow, and not tremble to possess,
Then my tongue might tell, then your soul might spell
The excess

Of her sweet and utter loveliness.

EARLY POEMS

Sapphics

Cease, O my spirit, cease this endless yearning!
Idly thou seekest ; gone is it, past hoping,
That golden treasure : thine own sweet contentment
See shalt thou never.

Glass'd in her waters, her own green haunts with music
Shall the flown mavis fill again, and warbling
Taste her old freedom : but oh, not the prisoned
Breast that is burning,

Burning, Myvanwy, from that smile whose sweetness
Takes mad the spirit and tells the trembling gazer
Peace is gone from him, peace and every thankful
Moment forever.

Passion-poised dreamer, what life is now left thee ?
Shall absence help thee to forget her ? Ah ! no
Far from those lovely smiles, that lovely presence,
Life becomes hateful ;

Dull seems each minute, each creeping hour I number.
Oh, though so distant, like a fire she haunts me
Absence may bring me fret, but never respite,
Never oblivion.

All the sweet radiant day in longing passes ,
Darkness but ushers hours of broken slumber,
Till, my heart struggling with her name half murmured,
Sad I awaken.

EARLY POEMS

Only when after pain there comes a languor,
And that strong image fades awhile grown dimmer,
Then do I something feel like peace, half hoping
Almost for freedom

But when I see her, and in mere stranger's greeting
For one sweet moment feel her hand within mine,
Oh, then through every vein quick shoots the fever,
Shoots the old madness ;

Once again o'er me comes that spell so potent,
Charmed by the sweet tones lost I sit in listening,
At each look trembling, her heavenly eyes give me,
Speechless with passion,

Drinking delicious fire, delicious anguish,
Grown half immortal —But ah! to what purpose
Doth thy heart beat so, doth thy breath oppress thee?
Vainly thou lovest!

Beautiful, distant as a star she smiles down
In virgin silence on thy fevered passion
Passion! She knows not what it means, in heavenly
Quiet reposing

IMMORTAL EVE

Songs of the triumph and mystery of beauty

IMMORTAL EVE

I

1

I the first man, the majesty
Of creatures, Time's tall birth,
Spring at God's finger-touch erect,
Glorying upon earth.

Above me the blue solemn heavens,
Around, the sun, the shade,
Green, whispering, glorious wilderness,
I knew for me were made ;

For me all broad Euphrates flowed
As stooping down I quaffed
Water's triumphant glory : winds
And waves, for me they laughed.

And the first bird sang piercing sweet ;
Leaves danced ; the rose its new
First odour infinitely breathed
For me—oh, where were you ?

2

You, the first woman, who should bloom
Out of creation's bud,
Perfect the six days' handiwork
And show that all was good ?

You were not : yet your fresh idea
Made leafier greenest shows,
Haunted the silence, something rare
Augured behind the rose.

IMMORTAL EVE

In all things, pure streams, mountain grand,
 Sky, valley, clouds that roamed,—
One awful sweet foreshadowing,—
 The world to beauty homed

And something flowerier than flowers
 And dewier than dew
Foreboded uncreated Eve,
 Thrilled Eden through and through.

3

The freshest of the cherubim,
 When I paced forth to see
Eden in my first natal hour,—
 Two angels—went with me,

Wonder and Rapture To my soul
 God's fair works Wonder showed ,
And fairer, far more glorious,
 Through Rapture's eyes they glowed.

Perfect, profound, mysterious, grand
 Was all t'wixt earth and sky ;
A miracle the mighty scheme,
 And the chief wonder, I

Bowed, worshipping the sovereign hand,
 Marvelling, full of pride ;
I kinship with the glory owned,
 Yet, why I knew not, sighed.

IMMORTAL EVE

4

Joyful, sufficient to thyself,
An image of the power
That made thee go domesticate
The brute, and train the flower,

God's gardener, upwards lift ! For friends,
Companions from the sky,
Angels shall visit thee and raise
Thy soul with converse high

Invisible or dim-perceived,
Oft in the cedar walk
Perchance at cool of eve with thee,
As friend with friend, shall talk

Thy heavenly Maker Eden shall
No desert be, nor lack
Sublimest friendships For whose hand
Lookest thou, lingerest back ?

5

I roamed through Nature's paradise
Tired, pensive, solitary.
Seeking you, Eve, in shapes I clothed
Cloud, water, crag, and tree

For the whole sympathy of heaven
And earth into the mood
Seemed wrought of that divine idea,
The image I pursued.

IMMORTAL EVE

Now through the wave diaphanous,
A Naiad to my hopes
You shone ; a swimming glory rose
Showering the water drops ;

The cloud wraith of your loveliness
Floated in every breeze.
Sprung on the hills an Oread ;
A Dryad peered through trees

6

'Twas in a valley first I thrilled,
Intranced wonder, Eve,
Hints of your softer majesty,
Your sweet strength, to perceive.

From the elm's leafy loftiness,
The poplar soaring fair,
Ash, beech, the willow's bending grace,
The woodland goddess there

Limbed into loveliness —I gazed,
The souls of those fair trees,
Unbarked, disbranched, and, what they we
Shy gentle Dryades,

Approached me ; calm tranquillities,
The spirits of the wood,
Shadowed my heart with peacefulness,
Hush, coolness, solitude.

IMMORTAL EVE

7

O ye whose fair umbrageous forms,
Though softer, seem allied
To mortal, glories of the glade,
What are ye, speak! I cried.

Your sky-embowering holy shapes
In shadowy secrecy
Seem to breathe joy and peace. Ye drop
Large leafy thoughts on me

Hovering, yet motionless, ye stand :
Speak! Language seems to start
From those soft whispering lips, like leaves
By fresh winds blown apart.

Creation's hopeless quest I seek,
The softer Adam, bliss,
Undreamed perfection ; which of you
Creation's glory is ?

8

Then one, the elm tree's shady soul,
Rooted in loftiness
Immovable. "In my large height,
Adam, thy dream possess

"The skyward ivy of thy thoughts
Clasping my bark, let stand
Earth fixed for ever in my shade,
Thy darkness cool and grand,

IMMORTAL EVE

“ Heights upon heights of bowery, fresh,
Soft-hanging shelter shall,
Fretted with sky-peeps, lure thee up ;
And strong boughs, lest thou fall,

“ Support thee. Root thy finger’s clutch
Into my stem, this pride
Of rough-barked grandeur, shadowy grace,
Nor seek another bridle ”

9

She smiled That sovereign stature next,
The lady of the oak,
Seemed over Eden broad to stretch
Her shady arm She spoke :

“ If grandeur, not sole height, thou seek,
Thy acre-shadowing glade,
Enter this Dodonæan girth,
Millennial, undecayed.

“ Here shall the eagle of thy hope
Rest wings, here, one by one,
Thy callow aspirations fledgèd,
Imp pinions for the sun.

“ Hyperborean doves be here
Prophetic, and when snow
Hoars nature, cut thou, Druid-like,
The immortal mistletoe ”

IMMORTAL EVE

10

I, Adam, I, who felt you, Eve,
My halved self, other heart,
Under my rib, diviner far,
Yet like in every part,

Answered . " Too mightily ye tower,
Too broadly do ye space
God's roomy dim idea, for me
Your sweet glooms to embrace.

" The leafier leafiness of you,
Your whispering soul of peace,
Lies far beyond my grasp, that dusk
Of shadowy secrecies.

" Virgin to your vast grandeur cool
Remain then, solemn trees,
Image your maker's holiness
And sway but to the breeze "

11

Oh lady of the rugged knees,
Whose vast girth hour by hour,
Gnarled, knotted through a thousand years,
Beneath the hand of power

Swaying, the blast and hurricane
Of the creative thought
Which gloriously to quiet gloomed
Thy acre-shadowing plot

IMMORTAL EVE

Of million whispers, still be thou
All day earth's canopy.
Glimmering and rustling, drink all night
Dew, darkness from the sky

God's day of thousand years for him
Date thou, with annual bark
Ring upon ring, that he from thee
An æon sped may mark

12

And thou, whose soaring heights of shade,
Thick-leaved, though rough thy rind,
Must effortlessly tall have climbed
Out of the heavenly mind,

Let the low ivy round thee ring
Her thousand fingers high,
Take tremulously undismayed
Those blue peeps of the sky ;

Still let the poise and grace of you
All day his thought embower,
Height by degrees ascending soft,
The placid ease of power.

Oft shall the Maker, visiting
Eden, with thee hold talk,
Thou whisper-laden majesty
Who crown'st the garden walk.

IMMORTAL EVE

13

Around those sylvan goddesses
Awful the stillness grew.
As back into their branching glooms
The holy shapes withdrew.

Once more to leafy loveliness
They limbed ; I, solitary,
Stood panged with alien beauty, lured,
Fretted, a hushed cold tree

Wishing myself. Could I so stand,
Said I, O dryads fair,
Whom the all-sapient heavenly hand
Rooted to rise in air,

In mossed contentment here would I
Anchor. A restless heart
He gave me, see, and wandering feet,—
Desires that shoot and dart.

14

Vaguely dim shadowy hints of thee
Spurred me, yet I delayed
'Twixt lofty elm and glorious oak
In that sequestered glade

Here should her stature limb to life,
Here leaf her lovely hair,
Yet yonder on the lawn I spy
Her cheek, and eyes how fair.

IMMORTAL EVE

Creation's wonder, where lurks she ?
I questioned ; in these bowers ?
Or in that deep grass virginal,
With faces that are flowers ?

As thus I lingered to be gone,
Answering my very thought,
I heard a soft still voice , it seemed
The spirit of the spot.

15

Yes, the divine soft solemn soul
Of Nature in that place,—
Its genius, its embowered whole
Of earth, sky, tree and grass ,

All that of loftiness had gnarled
In branching attitudes
High over-arched, that noble grove
Trained out of many moods ;

In heaven's tranquillity above,
The cold still ground below,
Its pensive self to think and breathe
Its dim self love and know ,

What voiced in landscape, God's vast pea
Just there, from depths of shade,
The woodland's dreamy heart profound,
"Adam!" it called and said

IMMORTAL EVE

16

“ Creation’s wonder and thy wife
Here selfed in landscape, see!
Soul of thy soul, thy fairer self,
Virgin I wait for thee.

“ With hilly and encircling sweep
My solitary arms
Reach out, to fold thee to my heart,
This breezy dusk of charms

“ This leaf-stirred forest, whose fair brows
Whose heaven-deep eyes how fair
Leaned down to shadow thee, and shroud
With verdurous wealth of hair,

“ Beauty, that glorious thing thou seest
Shyly, invisibly,
To wed thee waits, this maidenhood
Of greensward, tree, and sky.”

17

“ No longer fan thy heart’s pent fire
That fair invisible
To find, nor with an image seek,
With a dream-face, to dwell

“ Could she be lovelier, thinkest thou,
The soft majestic she,
Than this calm glorious face of things
That smiles for ever free ?

IMMORTAL EVE

“ The heart of nature, pure and warm,
Offered thee glad and near
Tranquilities of noble form
And secrecies of fear.

“ Peace and pure solitude am I.
Stay! fairer shalt thou find
None to companion thy lone thought,
Balm, solace thy sad mind.”

18

“ What shape art thou ? And whence proceeds
Thy solemn voice ? ” I cry,
“ Divine soul of this valley soft,
Who fain wouldst be my bride

“ Thy secret, shadowy charm I feel,
Like a cool finger laid
Upon my throbbing heart ; thy voice
I hear my haste upbraid

“ Come forth, twilight oblivion
Undraped, and her sweet form
Show me, that lovelier self I feel
Under my heart’s rib warm.

“ Thou, glorious valley, well may’st limb,
Thou forest, body forth
That splendour, fairest of God’s works,
Perfection’s sovereign worth.”

IMMORTAL EVE

II

I

Dear, could the wise creator make
Me, nor imagine you,
When from his wisdom's awful breath
I came like trembling dew,

You under my heart's rib I felt
Shiver and sparkle sweet,
With my first shock of being pulse
Your starry infinite.

Already in his thought you were
Enfolded like a bud,
Fragile and feminine, man's flower
And Nature's crowning good ,

Could He without the glorious stars
Make hollow heaven alone,
Make yearn the sad wave, and no shore
To break its heart upon ?

2

Far mountains unapproachable,
Stern and aloof, yon blue ;
Sad, solitary range! and we
Alone in Eden, two!

Beautiful, homeless wilderness
Around, waste skies above ;
Stung by his lonely star-fires, two
To hunger into love.

IMMORTAL EVE

This grandeur as in granite cut
The world's face Two to press
Shivering for love, warmth, each to each
In Nature's loneliness

He zoned us with disdainful things,
Cold and austere to make ,
Tremble to each two hearts, and fear
Each other to forsake

3

Above all other loves I place
The husband's and the wife's
The kiss that was in Eden kissed
Is both love's base and life's.

Without the heart-beat's two-fold rhythm
Life cannot be, nor show
In action perfect : feet and hands,
Eyes, lips, are only two

Marriage : it is the world's sane curb
The very school of trust,
The nurse of sanctity It builds
Joy out of daily dust

How else could heaven on ocean print
One soft perpetual kiss ?
Or earth in tender green toward heaven
Bosom to merge her bliss ?

IMMORTAL EVE

4

God placed the awful rondure vast
Of this great marriage-ring
The world, with consecrating earth,
Sky, ocean, everything,

To bind our two hearts chastely wed
With mutual exchange
Of the year's gold circumference,
Jewelled with beauty strange ;

Stars, diamonds of the distance, night's
Black opal, ruby new
Of sunrise, and leaves emerald-fresh,
And the clear pearly dew.

He with betrothing grandeur girt
Our hearts, and gorgeously
Made nature's sacrament of charm
Our wedding-ring to be

5

God made the world for me, for you,
That his dream-paradise
Re-imagined in first freshness, two
Might see in either's eyes ;

Revive lost Eden, fence out all
With forest, mountain-high ,
Yet through our leafy garden close,
Its whispering secrecy,

IMMORTAL EVE

The giant ages murmuring,—
Strife, hatred, anger rude,—
Faint, far-off, like a rumour strange,
Alarm our solitude.

We hear it ; smile, yet fearfully,
As 'twere the serpent's hiss,
Bosom to beating bosom, crush
Our wild hearts' lonely bliss

6

Love, heavenly Love, in your fair eyes
Fashioned the primal dew,
Ensouled me in pure paradise
To dwell with only you.

Love, the world's maker, Love divine,
Creative, hedged from sight
And hushed with whispering wilderness
Far tumult, loud affright,

There where hate is, battle and fear,
The fruit of knowledge bad,
Which should I taste with hungering ear,—
Toward shadowy history sad

Turn from you, dear,—like flaming swords
The angels of your eyes
Would drive me forth from joy and you
And dewy paradise.

IMMORTAL EVE

7

For hints, for prophecies of you,
That flowered from age to age,
I roam each lovely legend old
Where beauty strews the page .

Evadne, Phyllis, Hero sad,
I think of them ; I burn
Dido's too perishable dust,
And Procris in her urn,

You come, the sweet fulfilment, you,
Of all they once foretold ;
Straight at your touch they burst their tombs,
The lovely dames of old

As conjured by your spell they rise,—
Dead faces, glorious hair ;
And beauty, once more beautiful,
Remembers to be fair.

8

When your sole beauty, the world's charm,
Grows perilously fair ;
And shadowy tall heroes arm
To battle for your hair ;

When from your brow's triumphant worth
It seems the ages bled,
And through the leaves stern armour shone
Of glorious knights long dead ;

IMMORTAL EVE

And swords flamed, spears to splinters crashed,
And the rich blood streamed bright
Of Arthur's peers or Charlemagne's
For you in thundering fight ,

Enough then is one tranquil look
Out of your heavenly eyes,
To tell me we two are alone
And round us paradise.

9

Sole peace of Eden, though your cheek
The world's worth summarise,
Though passionate dead ages haunt
Those memories, your eyes ;

Oh, from that pageantry of dooms
Past or foreboded, where
You dwell with dim disastrous things,
With beauty and with fear ;

Though like a trumpet-blast your brow
Has power my soul to thrill
With famous battles long forgot
That bleed for beauty still ,

Lest Eden's lone peace perilous
With armies grow, refrain,
Lest from my sight you disappear
Into that pomp of pain.

IMMORTAL EVE

10

Ah! tell me not of heroines
And ladies long since dead ,
All their perfections, all their parts,
In you are summed and said

To look upon you is to hear
The clash of battles old ,
And tournaments of gentle knights
And splintering lances cold

For your sake, for the prize of you,
Do Troy towers flame again ,
And Hector and Achilles fight,
And for your sake are slain

So perilous your beauty seems
With rumour of old wars,
With crash and conflict But 't is I
Who bleed and bear the scars

11

What power is in your gentle eyes,
Immortal, blissful Eve,
With the whole race to sympathise
And even in Eden grieve ?

Though, in your smile, Temptation, Fall,
In that world-saving ark
Caught up, the Deluge we survive
Earth's giant ages dark,

IMMORTAL EVE

Blot out the past ; in your brows' arch,
Their rainbow peace, I see
Remembered the sad surge and flood
Of woful history

Though you revive lost bliss, your heart
Cradles august the pain,
The ancient primal woe of man,
And aches to mother Cain

12

Infinite Pity made the heavens,
Infinite Love the earth.
Yet shattering tempests rage, and here
Injustice laughs for mirth

I stuff my fingers in both ears
To hear those piteous cries.
I weep to see the groaning sphere
Drown in her miseries.

The murderer of his brother's hope,
The sweater and the slave,
The oppressor hideously enthroned,
Make human life a grave.

There seems no pity in the heavens,
No love on earth, a hell
Full of all shames and wrongs Meanwhile
You, you amongst us dwell.

IMMORTAL EVE

13

And did eternal Pity then
 Make all ? Ah ! sure it did .
And out of the eternal Love
 The heavens in glory shed.

I mind not now the mystery
 Of cruel wrong and strife,
This ancient wail through history
 This tangle deep as life.

I know there is a power that works
 All things to harmonise.
I know it from the ruth that lurks
 Deep in your gentle eyes.

Since first that pitying, loving look
 Made heaven of my poor earth,
I know the suffering soul of things
 Weeps to an angel birth.

14

I cannot wonder, O my Sweet,
 That you alone are you,
Could beauty else seem beautiful,
 Or truth itself be true ?

Were you not, could majestic heaven
 So tranquilly secure
Arch, or the everlasting hills
 Or solid earth endure,

IMMORTAL EVE

Or flowers be flowers ? creation knows
That you are you, and none,
In the least like you, fellow shall
Your peerless paragon.

And the high stars' recurring pomp,
Days, seasons, whisper me
Of that one certainty divine,
Assuring, she is she.

15

Dear, were you other than you are
By a hair's breadth, a swerve,
Were your cheek softly strange to me
By just the littlest curve ,

Were your voice other, not the trill,
The timbre sweet I know,
The way you have, to look, smile, speak,—
Only that way, just so,

That selfs you, lovely trick of you,
That darts such arrowy
Perfume, your individual rose,
To make us cry 'tis she!

Were that gone, all were gone for me ;
I should go wandering,
Blind, stumbling, seeking everywhere
The one thing, the one thing.

IMMORTAL EVE

16

Lilies are lilies and no more ,
The rose is just a rose
But your sweet loveliness to find—
Where is it ? no one knows

Not in your face, that paradise,
I find the sovereign spell.
Not in the gardens of your cheek,
Brow, chin, does beauty dwell.

Vaguer than violets, your eyes
Dim sweetness oracle,—
Breathe of a flower more lovely-rare,
Fragrance ineffable !

The rubies of your lips were mined
From richer depths below.
The lily and the rose of you
No white, no red can show.

17

The something more by which your eyes
Shine fairer than the sun,
The just a little that is your rose—
And mystery's begun.

What the world's myriad-petalled flower
Misses by some delight,
I know not what, some charm that's yours,
Divinely yours by right ;

IMMORTAL EVE

What in your tresses never yet
Breathed Helen, and outstrips
Just Cleopatra's witchcraft glance,
Just Rosamond's shy lips ;

The something that is everything,
And you in one apart,
Like but with heavenly difference,—
That is the sting, the dart.

IMMORTAL EVE

III

1

Peace, clamorous trumpets! Silence, drums!
Be breathless all and hush!
Let die applause. My lady comes,
My lady of the blush.

She's bashfuller than dew to hide,
Or dew-hung drooping rose.
Down-bent she keeps her queenly head,
Her eyes down-lidded close.

Of sentient fibre to the quick
She trembles, shrinks from praise
To look on her too earnestly
Sets all her cheek ablaze

Cease, gazing eyes, to disconcert
Her holy modesty,
And you, my songs, with shamefast awe
Her pomp accompany.

2

My rose, she blushes to be praised,
She wonders to be fair.
My lily of her pale pure bloom
Is shyly unaware.

At clear stars, water, woods, the flowers,
She looks with great wide eyes
The world to her a marvel is,
And life a rich surprise.

IMMORTAL EVE

Yet the prime marvel, what I find
In her to love, makes shine
Open in wistful wonder large
Her childlike eyes divine.

Is it mockery or flattery ?
Her dear look puzzled says ,
So utterly unconscious she
Of her own loveliness.

3

In your perfection secretly
I longed some fault to see ;
Some frailty, that this hopeless gulf
Might bridge 'twixt you and me.

I found the foible, thought I found ,
For when your eyes I praised,
They laughed with pleasure, yet a blush
Rebuked the joy I raised.

In that rich crimson some small tinge
Of conscious pride might be.
I but a new perfection found,
Your lovely modesty.

The virgin glory of a blush
Made you more perfect flower.
Still must your rich humanity
Above me seem to tower.

IMMORTAL EVE

4

Transparent as some lake, and calm
As mountain torrent's rest,
You keep the maidhood of the soul,
The childhood of the breast.

Around you in blue mystery
The eternal mountains lean,
Shoulder each other, rise to catch
The depths of your serene ;

And down to you the happy brooks,
A hundred laughters, come
To find in your pellucid depth
Peace, purity, a home

Though fast the trembling torrents rush,
Play, babble, without cease,
They deepen but your limpid hush,
They add but to your peace.

5

Subtraction were detraction, dear,
Multiplication tires,
And to divide perfection's sum
Were tasking angel-lyres.

I would in moments, Time's poor slave,
Your millioned worth make shine ;
You lie beyond the shot of praise,
Or slander's counter-mine.

IMMORTAL EVE

I do but vex arithmetic
With details of delight,
And shiver into fragments up
Your perfect chrysolite.

Vain torment of the pen, though sweet!
For after all is done,
Unknown, enchanting you remain,
Forever whole and one

6

The weakness of a woman's strength
You have, Love, you are frail
Only as harebells tremble soft,
As creepers catch and trail

The lovely pliant strength is yours
To yield, yet win your ends.
You have the weeping sympathy
With which the willow bends ;

The witchery of freakish fault,
Caprice and waywardness,
Allies you to our human earth,
Endearing weaknesses.

The richness of the garden soil
You show. All noble seeds
Flower in your nature, nor disdain
Some wild and random weeds.

IMMORTAL EVE

7

The violets unforgettable
Of those dark lovely eyes
Upon my spirit vaguely bloom,
With colour tantalise.

I strive to paint on baffled sight
The mystery of their hue.
Black are they, pansies of delight ?
Black ? Purple ? darkest blue ?

Those undeterminable hints
Are colour's sanctuary,
To hide from us inviolable
The world's dear mystery.

What spirit, the angel of your eyes,
Sits there invisible,
Their infinite deep shining darks
May hint, but never tell ?

8

Dear, when I look within your eyes,
What heaven do I see ?
What starry glorious universe
That gazes down on me ?

Infinite distance there I see,
And soaring oft see burn
Orion with his belt severe
And sworded brilliance stern ,

IMMORTAL EVE

And oft to baffle sight almost,
Radiant and soft, while flees
Their dovelike shimmer, peers the host
Of the sweet Pleiades ;

And then, when tender gloaming dusks
The evening of your eyes,
I see the lonely star of Love,
The planet Venus rise

9

Tell me what sage astronomy
May fathom those fair eyes,
Where still profounder depths clude
And show yet deeper skies

There, past the eagle's sparkling wings,
And past the swan I soar,
And past the Pegascan flight
Those heavenly deeps explore.

That glorious arch of streaming looks,
Your spirit's milky way,
Love, I have dared, and dreamed beyond,
With these poor eyes of clay.

Yet never could I gauge as yet
The distance infinite
It takes one heavenly look of yours
To shine down to my sight.

IMMORTAL EVE

10

Was she not graceful, formed so fair ?
Could I her shape exalt
Or God's hand save from faultlessness
Yet keep without a fault ?

Not tall, her stature seemed the rule
To inch perfection by.
Beauty, whate'er her attitude,
Stood with her just so high.

O sweet proportion ! How shall I
Describe her going's grace ?
Slow was it, stately, gliding ? Nay,
'Twas hers and beauty's pace

So perfectly in her God blent
The mean that never cloy,
To hold my heart in balances
And keep admiring poise.

11

O fair as hawthorn buds are fair !
O pure as privet meek !
With thy complexion shall I dare
The snowdrop's spotless cheek ?

She winnowed whiteness. Radiance' self
Had touched the common day,
Silvered the world with some rare dawn
That was her spirit's ray.

IMMORTAL EVE

The laughter, the simplicity
Of sunlight, what is it ?
The rainbow's glory of all hues,
The candour infinite!

So the eternal soul-blanch, she,—
Olympus, awful snow,—
To sheen to mortals, took life's prism,—
Sped Iris-like below

12

I think God meant that youth should fire
To beauty his bright dream,
That with his pomp of loveliness
Our passion too might stream

So flowery He the pitfall makes,
So sure he sets the gin,
Some glorious purpose beauty hides
To have our hearts fall in.

What are these mighty heavens he pranked
With stars ? What azure day ?
What sunset ? What this orb of things,
This rondure ? Who shall say ?

I know that to besiege my thoughts
Your face he framed so fair,
Tangled so rich and massed like storm
That purple cloud of hair.

IMMORTAL EVE

13

Who is it talks of ebony,
Who of the raven's plume ?
The glory of your tresses black
Will yield to neither room.

So thick the ambrosial dusk of you
Glooms in your locks, soul, sight,
The world itself is swallowed up
In darkness and delight

Tell me no more that black must be
Light's baffle, colour's loss.
Your tresses shoot into the sun
A richly purple gloss

It was the sunshine white of you
Which cast that wealth of shade.
There from the burning light of you
The world and I am laid.

14

I think a soul-shape grows behind
Your body's screening view.
'Tis what the deathless sculptor, Life,
Carves out of what is you.

Your essence, spiritual stuff,
Laughter, thought, effort, will,
Joy, suffering, all you feel, think, do,
Like Parian marble still

IMMORTAL EVE

Life chisels, the ulterior you,
Brow, cheek angelical,
And figure on life's handsome mould
Modelled till it excel.

Then when the atom-quarried mask
You drop, shall beam to sight
The dear familiar face I know,
Grown deathless, infinite!

15

Age and decay, ply, ply your powers,
Assault her beauty. She,
That which she is, what inly flowers,
For ever blooms, is free

Rain, sorrow, down those lovely cheeks!
Stream your remorseless flood!
You drench deep, happy roots, to make
Her spirit freshly bud.

Parch, fever's burning eye, this park,
This greensward beautiful,
Her flesh, the eternal violet
Lies caverned, mossy, cool;

It trembles ineradicable,
That harebell sweet; it grows.
Rough winds but shake down the dead leaves
That feed the deathless rose.

IMMORTAL EVE

16

And do they perish, the fair flowers—
This blushing come-and-go
Of roses, that so crimson burn,
Of lilies, pure as snow ?

Dust, nothing, they ? Such vital charm,
Such bloom ? It cannot be !
They too, like us, are spirits clothed
For thought, joy, agony

They too, though stirless, souls that live
In the eternal life,
Take armour, fragrantly enlist,
Sweet soldiers, to the strife,

Here in the battle beautiful,
Where fights the universe,
To God's far dream, the unknown good,
The bliss without a curse.

17

Is all we know, then, that we know
Nothing ? For certain, yes.
Yet your face time's arch-riddle put.
We risk a pregnant guess.

No more deep-browed philosophy
Questions the world, content
To read its secret in your smile,
The secret that God meant.

IMMORTAL EVE

Vision, dream, beauty, that far search,
Perfection, through all time,
Poets forget, to muse upon
Your eyebrow's married rhyme ;

And sculpture finds in your soft chin,
And painting in your cheek
The eternal rose of mystery
Ever on point to speak.

IMMORTAL EVE

IV

1

Her eyes were not of amethyst,
Her teeth were not of pearl
Human all over, laughing, crying,
Shrewd, simple,—just a girl!

Cheerful at the board's head she sat,
Meek in the firelight dreamed
The shining angel she suppressed,
And only woman seemed.

She took me off my guard with smiles ;
Her kindness lulled alarm ,
She blinded me with lovely looks
And tender simple charm :

But a wild glory lit her ways,
Her every act had wings.
Each smile, each look, each motion threw
Seraphic halings.

2

Soft, slowly soft, to my awed sight
And soul the vision grew.
No fault of mine, no frailty dashed
Her tranquil look. She knew!

Her steadfast sweetness mocked surprise,
So humbly she forgave.
A spirit she seemed, in majesty
Of meekness armed to save.

IMMORTAL EVE

Once only with a grieving look
The goddess she betrayed,
Like Psyche when the lamp to her
Love's sleeping form displayed.

I trembled both for joy and dread :
A glory from above,
A daughter of the Eternal, I
Had wedded, dared to love.

3

A fragrance of rich homeliness
You breathe, so lovely rare,
Dulce domum the whole house cries
And "home, sweet home," the air

The very doors unwillingly
Shut after you, "She comes,"
Floor, rafter, the dear walls, each thing,
At your sweet entrance hums.

No flashy stranger in her house,
No gad-about they know.
The homely odour of your dress
Proclaims you as you go.

And "our queen" now the parlour cries,
And "ours" the drawing-room ;
They know who brings the rich content,
Who banishes the gloom.

IMMORTAL EVE

4

Muse of my worship, lean from heaven,
And touch my trembling lyre.
I cannot sing your heavenly worth
Unless you give the fire.

Nay, take the instrument from me,
And sweep the chords along
Be, love, your own sweet poetess,
And be yourself the song

You build the verses Thoughts and words,
It is from you they come :
Your beauties, virtues, sing themselves.
What need for me to sum ?

Be but your silent self, and you
Are poesy, the theme
And source exhaustless of all song.
You are your poet's dream.

5

Her heart, that native diamond,
Out of her bosom's mine
Frankly she gave me, as it were
A toy, that gem divine !

Of purest water its rare worth
Lay, clouded, till I met
Love, the wise jeweller, to cut,
Polish for me and set

IMMORTAL EVE

He took and rubbed with hard distress,
The diamond dust of pain,
Her heart's rough native worth, until
It shone and shone again

Now in a thousand facets cut,
It sparkles out at me,
The brilliance of eternal love,
Eternal constancy

6

When of your holy constancy,
Your faithful heart I tell,
I think of no hard lofty pose,
Alas, too frangible!

You were not coldly dutiful,
A rock mid dashing seas ;
You opened to the beautiful,
You swayed upon the breeze.

The sunshine of your joy you spilled
In smiles on everyone,
Your warm heart brimmed in friendships frank
And joyous as the sun,

But still, mid frolic mirth, to me
A soft look stole, to say
Show where your heart was casketed
Deep from the gaudy day.

IMMORTAL EVE

7

When virtue and yourself I name,
It is a word too bleak,
Too gaunt and steely, life's rich play—
Your living worth—to speak

Your character I paint. But life
Sings in your words and deeds
What I in rigid moulds would cast
Escapes . the statue bleeds

Your qualities are sentient things,
Elusive and alive ,
Virtues, but still the lotus needs
Low nature's mud, to thrive.

When I have called you woman meek,
Wise mother, perfect wife,
Your own sweet mystery still you are
And God's, his secret Life.

8

Let me not to hard diamond
Compare your virtue, dear,
Who softer than a moonbeam are,
More tender than a tear

He who would sum the life, the charm,
The magic, that is you,
Must catch the distance of the star,
The tremble of the dew.

IMMORTAL EVE

To sunset's gorgeous langour he
Must add the morn's fresh ray,
And all the sparkling hush of night,
And all the blaze of day.

Such is your sheen, no diamond
Your heart, though true as steel,
No hardness has. A look, a word,
Would break it, ne'er to heal.

9

I must not call her mirthful ; sad
She was not No extremes
Might shake her charmed sobriety
Or cloud-enchanting gleams

For if thought saddened on her brow,
'Twas April in her blood ,
Archly her rippling mirth would break
The melancholy mood.

So perfectly from cloud to shine
Her temperate nature ran,
That sunshine might not know where shade,
Nor shade where sun began

As some she was not coldly gay ;
Too near her heart to earth !
'Twas laughter rich with sympathy,
'Twas tear-drops dashed with mirth.

IMMORTAL EVE

10

Music you loved , it was your life.
No new song, lovely air,
But you straight caught and hummed, as though
You in its secret were.

Thy mystery of melody
Was in your pulse of being :
Far heavenly chimings lit your eyes,
And song to you was seeing.

Colour had music's life to you.
The very grasses sang,
To you the cosmic organ peal
In diapason rang

God framed of harmony entire
That piece of music, you,
To be to yourself lyrical
In all you say or do

11

At your unworshipped deity
I rage, I fill with shame
Wildly I think to all the world
Your glory to proclaim

To find salvation in your smile,
In your look paradise,
A zealot in that blissful faith
I would the world baptise ,

IMMORTAL EVE

Spread my own joy Therefore my songs
Like fiery prophets go,—
Make to her beauty proselytes
Mortality and woe

Let blind men see those lovely looks,
The deaf her laughter hear,
Wash in her living charm the soul
Of either hemisphere.

12

Mimnermus, Smyrna's tender bard,
The sweet Ionian, sang
Of Nanno To his mournful lyre
He chanted love's rich pang,—

Our short-lived youth, old age that comes
So soon, so swift youth's bliss,
All that in our strange, human lot
Familiar sorrow is

And Nanno, Nanno, on the chords
Sobb'd, ever went and came
Nanno, the lovely flute-player,
Who touched his soul to flame.

Dead and divine, her name he gave
His tender elegies, '
As I to these the name whose sound
Is love's and ecstasy's.

IMMORTAL EVE

13

Be still our standard-bearer brave,
A beacon to the free!
Be still the rally to all fact,
All truth, all loyalty!

I ask not that a compelling bond
You keep, to me be true
I am unworthy to unloose
The latchet of your shoe

I am unworthy, love, to touch
Ground you have glorified
Your estimation takes no blot,
I urge not honour's pride.

But should you waver, you, who lead
The vanguard where drums beat,
How shall the host of hell come on,
Heaven's armies sound retreat!

14

Not only doth infinity
Brood on our hearts It sighs
Through nature—all this mournful heave
Of earth, those yearning skies,

The illimitable hollow, sad,
Blue space of heaven august,
Stooping in awful sympathy
Over this ail of dust

IMMORTAL EVE

And star fires tremble it , the trees
Feel in their branches groan
World-old indignity, some gash
Remembered in the moan

Of the wild wind, and in the seethe
And surge of ocean's pain ,
That sundering rift and chasm, of which
Our lonely hearts complain

15

Stars, universes, might that moves
Guided by system, law,
Inexorable, deaf, my soul
You shall not overawe

Earth, on thy breast I know not whence
I came, what powers to thank,
Nor whither, sun, thy glorious beams
Conduct me. All is blank.

We, too, are planets wandering
Like the round globe we tread ,
Each soul a tiny universe,
With vastness round us spread.

Though blind we rush, what matter ? God
Guides through the boundless ether
What matter if, like earth and moon,
We go, love, still together ?

IMMORTAL EVE

16

Pæan of immortality,
O Godward peal of praise!
Ring, ring within my mortal ears,
My fainting spirit raise!

I falter, flag in the great rhythm
That thunders up to bliss:
I tremble, in this chime of worlds
One little voice to miss

Hard, hard in Nature's choral praise
I find my part to bear,
Since one soft lute, her gentle voice,
Her laugh, I cannot hear.

The sun may give his golden shout,
Her silver song the moon,
And brook and bird chime in; but I
Am jangled, out of tune.

17

It was to others that she spoke
Kindly in words To me
The lavish silence of her look
Reserved its oratory.

For oft from casual speech I felt
The glory of her gaze,
Sidelong with starry secrecies,
My beating heart amaze,

IMMORTAL EVE

How oft, to greet me, send a ray
From those dark depths, my heaven,
Millioned with thought-fires to my look
Sweet answers hath she given

Now she is gone, from heaven itself
The angels of her eyes
Visit my heart's vexed loneliness
With comforting replies

18

My drooping flower, my Maloti,
Your dear head hang not so!
You wither on the stem, alas!
But tell me, then, your woe.

You gaze upon me speechless, dumb.
The sorrow that constricts
Your throat no utterance gives, to tell
What 'tis your heart afflicts.

It is that old hysteria's ail,
The cost that woman pays
To bring forth children. With your night
You have increased the days'

Gloom, silence! Is it thus He meeds
Your motherhood sublime,
With your birth-throes and agony
To new-stock failing time?

IMMORTAL EVE

19

Look, as some long-lost glorious star
From where it sinks to sight
Shoots a far-travelled splendid ray,
The after-age to light ,

So through the wreck of beauty gone
Your bright look comes to me ,
Surviving angels, your dear eyes,
Still illumine memory

How can the glory that was you
Still light my soul, a sun,
And you, the glory-shooter, you,
Whelm'd, sunk in oblivion ?

Its splendour was the star. Your soul,
The real of you, survives,
Homes to the spirit ; ray on ray
For ever still arrives.

20

“ What is that vast eternity
In your dear eyes begun ? ”
I asked, she answered, “ 'Tis to see
From God's side of the sun.”

“ And our sad world ? ” “ It is the same
Eternity, but seen
Through a glass dimly-tarnished, flashed
A duller gold and green.”

IMMORTAL EVE

“ And can the beatific, bright,
 Sheen prospect sorrow move ? ”
“ We see the whole world in the light
 Of pity and of love ”

A hero now I see you, dear ,
 Know what our last life meant ;
With larger eyes compassionate
 I see, and am content.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES :

Songs of the Pain, Passion and Mystery of Death

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Can It Be ?

I mind me how her smile was sweet
And how her look was gay.
O, she was laughter, joy complete !
And can she now be clay ?

I see the roses on her grave
They make my sad heart bleed
I see the daisies shine like stars
And is she earth indeed ?

All lovely things with beauty are,
And just deeds shine as just.
And faith and truth and duty are
And is she only dust ?

The great sky keeps its solemn blue :
Fresh earth is wildly fair
Can all things be, and I and you,—
She nothing, she nowhere ?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Rider on the White Horse

How did I lose you, sweet ?
I hardly know
Roughly the storm did beat,
Wild winds did blow.
I with my loving arm
Folded you safe from harm,
Cloaked from the weather
How could your dear foot drag ?
Or did my courage sag ?
Heavy our way did lag,
Pacing together.

I looked in your eyes afraid,
Pale, pale, my dear !
The stones hurt you, I said,
To hide my fear
You smiled up in my face,
You smothered every trace
Of pain and languor
Fondly my hand you took,
But all your frail form shook ,
And the wild storm it struck
At us in anger

The wild beast woke anew ;
Closely you clung to me
Whiter and whiter grew .
Your cheek and hung to me
Drooping and faint you laid

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Upon my breast your head,—
Footsore and laggard
Look up, dear love, I cried :
But my heart almost died,
As you looked up and sighed,—
Dead-weary, staggered

There came a rider by ,
Gentle his look.
I shuddered, for his eye
I could not brook.
Muffled and cloaked he rode,
And a white horse bestrode
With noiseless gallop.
His hat was mystery,
His cloak was history ,
Pluto's consistory
Or Charon's shallop

Could not the dusky hue
Of his robe match,
His face was hard to view,
His tone to catch.
“ She is sick, tired. Your load,
A few miles of the road,
Give me to weather.”
He took as 'twere a corse
Her fainting form perforce.
In the rain rider, horse,
Vanished together.

Come back, dear love, come back!
Hoarsely I cry ;

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

After that rider black
 I peer and sigh :
After that phantom steed
I strain with anxious heed,
 Heartsick and lonely.
Into the storm I peer
Through wet woods moaning drear.
Only the wind I hear,
 The rain see only.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Dewdrop

In the bliss, they say, of the love that laves the skæes and
ocean and earth,
All things hasten to lose, they say, the grieving ripple of
birth.
Why, then, ah! do I tremble and pale at the thought of
thee, O Death,
And shivering, stand to take my plunge in that infinite
sea of breath?
There are the lost joys of my life, far sunk beyond rave
and fret;
There are the souls of dreams unflowered, and the roses
of regret.
There is the sunken dreadful gold of the once that might
have been,
Shipwrecked memory anchors there, and my dead leaves
there are green
Why in the merge of all with all by a plunge recoverable,
Desperate diver shudder I from all pearls in one shell;
For there more precious than all things lost is the one
that I let fall,
One heart brimful of love for me, her love that encask-
eted all
Dear, like a trembling drop of dew I held thee in my hand;
How of a sudden could I so spill as to lose it in infinite
sand,
Fresh on the rose-petal of life, with its fragrance through
and through
Drenching my heart? I held thee long, thou trembling
drop of dew.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

As I stood sadly secure of thee, as happy I looked my
fill,
Thou from that rose petal didst glide and vanish in salt
sea rill
Now by the infinite shore I roam, the bliss that all
things laves ,
Down-bent, weeping, I seek for thee by a mournful
music of waves,
Deaf to the grandeur and the roar that hath washed
thee away from me ;
In the streaming sands and my own salt tears I wildly
look to thee
Thou with the freshness and the foam art glorying
borne away ,
I mid wreck and driftwood grope and dally with all
dismay.
“Come back, tremulous heart,” I sob, “heart’s bliss, come
back,” I cry.
Only the solemn ecstasy of waters makes reply.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

A Vision of Death and Sleep

O'er her death-bed
With sobs I hung,
Wild, idle sobs, and in my lonely pain
Kiss'd the dead face again and yet again,
And to the cold form passionately clung
Weeping
With peaceful head
She on her pillow,
As past this angry billow,
Life's rude tumultuous rocking, in some bay
Anchored, some far enchanted haven, lay
Sleeping

Wild, idle tears
I shed to know
That she was gone for ever past my hail.
That was the glint of her departing sail,
That peace ineffable I long'd to go
Thither!
For, past all fears
And shocks of sorrow,
In the eternal morrow
Her drifting bark had anchored. I left lone
On life's rude sea longed for that world unknown—
Whither ?

As thus I wept,
And watched in awe
Rapt with the beauty of that angel strand

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Where I was sure her soul had driven aland
The ecstatic, white, still, face 'twas then I saw,
Weeping,
How toward me stept
Two forms of glory
Pilots of our brief story
Who lull and convoy nature. Gently they
Came, where in trance marmoreal she lay
Sleeping

Sleep o'er her head
Death at her feet
Silent and shadowy stood I knew them come
To carry what I loved to its last home,—
Her body, that familiar form too sweet.
“ Lover,”
Sleep pitying said,
“ Take thy last kisses
Of her. Alas, what bliss is
To thee that senseless relic ? Pilots we
Of nature, come to waft mortality
Over.”

O'er the dear clay
Weeping I hung :
To me each atom of her earth and life
Smelt not of death but blossomed memory-rife
Old smiles, love, kisses, tears To it I clung
Weeping.
“ Take not away,
Angels of pity,
From me the ransacked city

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Where dwell such tender memories ' Spare her,
Death!
Leave her a lovely mummy void of breath,
Sleeping "

“ Vainly thou prayest,
Made blind with pain,”
Death answered. “ Each dear particle, each mote
That once made up her sweetness wouldst thou dote
So fondly on, to have with thee remain
Eternal ?
They cry us haste
To ship them Weeper,
We wafted have thy sleeper
To bliss That is not she Across the river,
Time's wintry stream, she breathes and flowers
for ever
Vernal !

Dissever then
Thy arms from dust
That once was proud to sheathe her, be the dress,
Organ and tool of so much loveliness,
Great nature back demands her loan Be just,
Not crazy
With grief and pain.
We come to carry
What was her dear flesh, marry
Anew in life's great ferment ; to compose
Flowers on her grave triumphant, kingcup, rose,
Daisy.”

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

With a wild cry
I clung to her—
The all that dreadful immortality
Spared of the warm, terrestrial, trivial she,—
All that had laughed, smiled, wept, made lovely stir.

Anguish !
One kiss to fee
Wage, take farewell for ever
From that ! All sweet links sever
With the dear past ! So curtly *her* dismiss !
I never could the sorrow of that kiss
Vanquish !

Death stooped and Sleep
Over her now ,
Stooped as to lift her Yet they lingered still ,
Inexorably gentle to fulfil
Their functions, grief they did awhile allow.

“Mortal,”
In my ear deep
Death murmured, “Render
To grass, earth, flowers what’s tender,
Sweet, sacred, but not she. Her soul by this
Hath scaled the ramparts that the walls of bliss
Portal.”

“Take me too, Death,
Take me,” I cried.
Through his dark wings I breathed that flowery
place,
The rapt Elysian peace of her still face
Seemed to say, “Come ’Tis sweet here To my
side

Hither! ”

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

“Nay!” His cold breath
Chilled and made me shudder
“Thy yet distressful rudder
Must unaccompanied cut life’s sea alone
Thou art not ripe to reach that world-unknown
Whither

Above her grave
A little while
Weep if thou wilt, where soon the rose shall laugh,
Oxlips triumphant write her cenotaph.
But her poor earth delay not in exile
Suffer
Lilies to have
Birth from her beauty.
The marguerites tall do duty
O’er that still mound There weep. Thy fond
regrets,
Tears, memories, to the dreaming violets
Proffer ”

The dear still feet,
As thus he spoke,
Death lifted. Of his mighty wings (no error
Fools us to fear), the outspread shadowy terror
I felt, the strength. And my heart almost broke
Weeping.
All that was sweet,
Past precious to me,
Death on his pinions gloomy

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

On argent plumes Sleep took My soul sank dead.
Gently he lifted her still peaceful head
Sleeping

 Murmuring he stooped
 So sweet, so soft,
Toward me, the charm of his world-lulling voice
Drugged for a moment agony : "Rejoice !
Thy love to visit thee shall I bring oft,
 Only
 Despair not, drooped
 O'er dead earth She, her sweetness
 Divine on my wings' fleetness
Shall come to thee " He spoke, and with a shiver
On silver wings was flown, I left for ever
 Lonely !

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

It Cannot Be

It cannot be
Rose, violet, lily,
Their crushed life should retain,—
Flowers that recall thy sweetness be ensouled,
And thou distil to nothing, thou not hold
Still, through all change, in fee
Inalienable thy being's tenancy ;
Not, through the crush of essence, phial again

Impossible!
This hollow empty shell,—
How like thy soft, small ear!
Can it the wide sea's whisper, wash and foam,
Ocean's vast life, remember, dimly home ?
Nor thou, dear love, as well
Whorl'd in whatever spiral house sense dwell,
Our past life's haunting music still not hear ?

My frailer eye,
Dim window, can it spy
Through each wet streaming pane
This blurr, life's stormy landscape ? and can thine
From the clerestory of the life divine
Not, though embayed so high,
Catch prospect of my sorrow, memory
To think of those pure diamonds well may stain.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Oh, can a star,
Moonrise or dawn afar,
In this dark hut of clay
Chink crevices of glory, that bright world
Where thou with truth eternal art upfurled ?
Nor thou, dear love, the bar
Beat through of utter beauty, things that are,
To reach back to the glimmerings of our day ?

Thee to suggest
Shall memory take such zest,
Almost thy vacant couch
Remoulds thee to my vision, or the stair
Gives me thy shape familiar, thy soft air ?
And thou, dear love, not dressed
Pure substance, thy perfection, at heaven's best
Stream through the old sweet memory, brig
avouch ?

Yes, through my earth
I feel the shadowy birth
In at each spiritual sense
Struggle of thy new beauty ; in surprise
Reel at a hint of those now angel eyes ,
And for thy smile, in dearth
Of sweetness so transcendent of its worth,
To be delivered, yearn with pain intense.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Heavenly Sorrow

Sorrow, heavenly sorrow !

Wake thou in my breast

It is to rouse thee with the cold grey morrow,
Melancholy, as thou springst in the east

Dawn with secret tremble,

When first pale the skies,

Joy's ancient, still, sweet birth must needs dissemble,
To wake thee, and with thee to sympathise.

Day, her glorious burden,

Day, earth's joy, she lingers,

Thee awfully with sad pale smile to guerdon,
Thee, heavenly sorrow, touch with brightening
fingers.

Thou on my heart sleeping,

Rude unrestful pillow,

Rock'd on that dreamless wave, in wells of weeping
Did'st drench and steep thee, like a drooping willow.

Over my heart drooping

All night without stir,

Thou in those mournful depths with stars wast
stooping

Down, with all heaven ; for but the dream of her.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

There the wild sweet folly
Didst thou, the sad zest,
Shake of thy holy passion, Melancholy,
To glut thee on the shadowy soft feast.

All night not a glimmer
In those waters black!
Now pales the cold dawn's world-awaking shimmer;
It shivers through my heart's wave, oh, awake!

Rouse from stagnant languish!
Dawn with Memory
Steals chill to pierce thee into heavenlier anguish,
When wells the old wound up, to bleed in me,

When to waked eyes slowly
Softly dreadful morn
Lets blossom to her dead dear memory wholly
The desolation of its rose forlorn

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Lonely Road

I

For your blithe step I sigh
Gone on the road before me ;
For your warm hand I cry
On life's path rough and stormy.
'Tis weary in wind and rain,
Trudging the open plain,
Moorland and heather ;
'Tis hard against blasts to beat
Lonely without you, sweet ;
No more together !

Under one cloak with me,
Love's warm cloak under,
With you I recked, for glee,
Rain-shower nor thunder.
Reft of your warmth I press
My wrap of loneliness
Shivering round me :
Dead leaves come pattering down
On the bleak way ; all alone
Winter has found me.

II

Lonely of you, my darling,
That heart chill, to hear no more
Your voice like music's oar
Waft on its tones apart

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

To fairy lands my heart.

'Tis as life's road had in it
Now not a warbling linnet,
Throstle, or starling

You, of song-birds the sweetest,
Filled the thickets with singing,
And still the sweet notes ringing
As every moment back
Would bring the voice I lack.
Sweet notes' of all sounds now
The mournfullest that thou,
Echo, repeatest.

The world to silence hollow
Empty of you is grown,
Since the silver is flown
Of your fresh voice. Yet all
Of you is musical
Is it only fancy's ear
Catches the sound? I hear
And long to follow.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Face, to Memory Clear

Face, to memory clear,
That comes to thieve me
Into the fancy dear
'Tis your lost eyes I see
Shining once more on me,—
Your very lips I sight
Smiling the old delight!
Dead face, in memory fair,
With the old brow, the old hair
Triumphant, can you be,
Sweet shadowy witchery!
Only a thing of air
Come to deceive me?
Only an image vain,
Wrought as a balm for pain,
Mirrored upon the brain,
Only to mock my sense
With shadowy, intense,
Thrust, rapture, then to fade
How like an empty shade!
Then in the present cold,
Heartbroken, lonely and old,
Leave me?

Whether, O face divine,
A lovely phantom holy,
Out of my brain you shine,
A mind-made thing complete,
Oh, but the creature sweet

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Of my heart, of my own
Self-pleasing fancy lone,—
Or whether to the wand,
Sacred spirit, of fond
Compelling thoughts you come,—
Real, yourself respond
To melancholy
Sad ardent longings, oh,
Be not an empty show,
Only to come and go!
Beautiful lips approach
And heal me with a touch!
Give but the old sweet kiss,
Cheat with remembered bliss
My folly!

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Eternal Infant

Lord of the lovely pageant,
Maker of night and day,
Is this a theme for glory,
To give and take away ?

I am no thankless ingrate,
Kindler of my life's flame !
I own thee king of bounty,
Thy lavish gifts acclaim.

For thy fair heavens I thank thee,
And thank for thy fresh earth
I brim with grateful praises
For thy swift gift of birth.

To leave thy blissful bosom
'Tis rich amends to be ;
Thy pageant show of seasons
And days and nights to see.

Awaking from soft slumber
The rare rich things I dreamed,
The rose and the carnation,
To have upon me streamed.

Now better were the silence,
The peace divine and deep,
In dream and tranced vision
Upon thy breast to sleep !

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

I had not left my slumber
Upon thy cradling breast,
Hadst thou in dreams not shown me
One flower beyond the rest.

More sweet than the carnation,
More rich than rose to me.
The flower that gems creation,
Thy flower called Emily.

From her rare sight awaking,
I fretted for the boon,
Life and that flower resplendent ;
I cried to have my moon.

My flower with life thou gavest.
For her love's sake 'twas sweet,
Thy earth, the rain, the roses ;
She made thy gifts complete.

A puppet show of glory,
These were but painted toys.
The princess of the story
She queened my heart and joys.

Together we crowed over
The show, we laughed in chime,
But now it tires and dazzles,
Thy lovely pantomime.

I fret with drowsy eyelids
To hear thy lullaby,

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Upon thy cradling bosom
To sleep again I sigh.

A babe, no man of patience,
I were an hypocrite
To say He gives, He taketh
And all He does is right.

O master of the pageant,
Maker of night and day,
Is this a theme for glory,—
To give and take away?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Wind in the Trees

At the window I lean,
And my heart is a mist
'Tis a whispering scene,
Where all was whist!

Whist and still was the garden ; but now a breeze
Takes the tree-tops all, the whispering trees ,
Makes of verdure music and shakes dead silence to life,—
O silence that toms at my heart, without hope, without
strife!

Sighing, the stair
I slowly descend.
Strayed pilgrims so fare
Who roam without end
Down the ghostly staircase, where her lost tread
Haunts my heart with the music of days that are dead,
My own step daunts me with echoes down through the
gloom,—
O echoing dusk at my heart that aches with her empty
room!

Out in the garden,
Where flowers seem amiss,
I hear it sigh "pardon "
To be what it is.
Swaying, the branches above me seem one long sigh.
O tremulous wash of sound that pauses to die,
They have eased their sad hearts out on the swell of the
breeze,
O tremblings of deep-drawn sighs that hurt and never
give ease.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Sighing, I wonder
Up at green leaves,
To see them grow fonder
With the gust that bereaves
On the very breeze that shakes them, which ere it is
done
Robs their lovely thousands, and one by one
Makes them whirl to the ground in yellowing sheaves,—
O gust at whose dance my heart in a passion of mystery
grieves.

Whence has it blown,
Invisible death,
From the blue unknown?
It is life, it is breath
Unto them, for the whole bough quivering blows one
way,
Rippling ecstasy takes to dance with the gay,
Unseen freshness, that whirls the drooping foliage,
awake,—
O whirl at my own sad heart that asks to be still and
break!

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Lines

I sit by the hearthfire lonely,
The vacant armchair by,
And think of the sweet days only
When she who is gone was nigh.

The flame in the dying embers
Flickers with shadowy fall,
And the senseless wood remembers
And glows memorial

You know what memory's charm is,
Shining mahogany back!
For your stillness softly warm is
With the one thing that I lack.

And my heart from dying ashes
Suddenly flickers aflame
To the glory that abashes
And the hope without a name.

Vividly but for a moment
The air with her is sweet,
Across Time's angry comment
Her eyes and my eyes meet.

Her old gaze shining tender,
That loving look, I see
Reproach me with soft splendour
That I should lonely be.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

That sweet gaze spiritual
Fades on my deep desire,
Only a moment's fuel
Kindles to my soul's fire.

The wind without is weeping.
Of the churchyard it tells,
Where the daisies are creeping
And the mute earth mournful swells.

The wind in the pine is solemn,
Its great boughs sigh and groan,—
The pine-tree like a column
Upon the hillside lone

In a patter come the showers ;
Mournfully beats the rain ;
The landscape blurring, the flowers,
It streams on the window pane.

I sit by the hearthfire lonely,
Her vacant arm-chair by,
And think of the sweet days only
When she sat smiling by.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Lines

Ah, why so solemn, Memory ?
Her sacred ashes take,
And of adoring sighs and tears
A holy ikon make :

My dead love, as she living were ;
Her breath, her bloom give back,
And with her laughter lily-clear
Appease the lorn world's lack.

Not as through tears I see it shine,
Her beauty back to me
Transfigured, distant, half divine,
Give, weeping Memory,

No, but her old self, laughter-rife,
Arch, mocking, bring me clear !
Stab, sting me with her earthly life,
The wayward sweet of her !

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Afterglow

"She is here!" to my wild heart I murmur :
I repeat, "It is she, it is she!"
But my wild heart, growing no firmer,
Sighs sadly, "It cannot be!"

O my heart, my wild heart, I answer,
Thy doubtings to certainty hush.
How else should that beautiful dancer,
Hope, through my arteries rush?

Could'st thou in my bosom be beating
So wildly, if she were not nigh?
But my heart kept thickly repeating
"'Tis but a sweet butterfly."

"She is here! It is she!" in a whisper
I nudge my wild heart to say.
The leaves announce her and lisp her,
And the flowers by their stillness betray.

The lily is white with its wonder;
Wild rumours the roses apprise.
The doves, they have seen and grow fonder.
Wild heart, believe and have eyes!

The doves in the tree-tops are cooing;
Abuzz in the lime are the bees.
They are wild her sweet face to be wooing.
What ails thee to doubt and to freeze?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Awake to each lovely pulsation
Of wings, that ambassadors come
To herald her step ; 'tis elation,
'Tis rapture, where all was now dumb

Rose, canna and lilac, each warden
She left of her memory here,
They know when she walks in her garden.
What ails thee to doubt she is here ?

List not to the whispering treason,—
Misgivings that make thee to start
Look not through the cold eyes of reason
Through thy wild eyes look, O my heart.

Each pulse-beat thou givest to fancy
Shall ope for thee hundreds of eyes,
To look with the rose and the pansy,
Her unseen presence surprise.

Can all nature have sight to behold her ?
Can the air yearn after and feel,
Nor love, faith, courage be bolder
With keener sense to reveal ?

See, Hope hath her lantern supplied thee,
And Memory hers, from behind.
She is standing, is smiling beside thee
She touches thee, heart. Art thou blind ?

Thy candle of fantasy give me !
Oh, give me the lamplight of dream !

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Her sweet face, her figure, believe me,
Heart, my heart, on thy wild eyes shall stream.

She is here She but waits for our greeting.

Oh, strain to clasp her through air !

Why wildly, my heart, art thou beating
With the hope that consumes despair ?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Lines

Though I be in the shadow still,
And you be in the sun,
Sundering divorce the more endears ,
Division makes us one.

From out the sunshine and the breeze
She to my heart replies,
Silent love-letters wafting me
On wings of butterflies.

Across death's bar infrangible
Upon my cheek I feel
Her kiss with touch intangible
All ache of severance heal.

The wild breeze but her laughter is
To me, her look the star ;
Roses her breathing,—and can she,
Soul of my soul, be far ?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Yellow Butterfly

Of all shy visitants, I love
That darling butterfly,
Whose wings are to the cornfield's wave
A hovering reply,

Yellow as dancing wheat-ears ripe
He suns with his gay youth,
And feeds me with the gold of light,
The thrice-tried gleam of truth.

When, glooming back upon myself,
The garden path I pace,
He comes and makes my gladdened eyes
The dial to his grace.

Unfailing omen, punctual sign!
No sooner am I out,
He hovers by on golden wings
To chase the grey of doubt.

All melancholy thoughts to thresh,
Winnow the blissful grain
Of immortality, and sift
From mortal fear and pain.

Day after day the marvel grows ;
Ever his gladsome morn
Shines down the blackness of my grief
With glancing wings of scorn,

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Now from the creeper's bowery height,
Now o'er the garden wall ;
From far-off places, or where first
The wonder did befall.

In that low bed of coxcomb flowers
Beneath her window-sill,
Her chamber-window, where he warms
Homeward my spirit still ,

Or plumb-down from the soaring roof
He to my awful eye
His radiant message angels me
From azure depths of sky

I cannot with ungrateful heart
Feel God's fair world a blank.
Straight for the sunny thought of her
His yellow wings I thank

I cannot still, her sight to want,
Weep like a thwarted boy,
Cry outright, but with darting gold
He chides me back to joy

The stupor of the miracle
Ever renewed, the fear,
I lose in charmed tranquillity,
For she, my saint, is here.

Who works it ? No dead relic sweet
Of her, my living saint,.
Perfect beyond the skill of thought
Or fancy's power to paint.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Whole from her suffering martyrdom
She is arisen. No tomb
Could hold her, no far blissful heaven
Allure. Her heaven is home.

No place more holy than these walks,
This garden, where the flowers
Swing censers breathing up to God,
This house a Book of Hours.

No room but memory's sacred hand,
Gilded, illuminate,
Paints how she suffered, loved and died,—
The legend of her fate

In heaven she is; beatitude
To her, her loved ones still,
So loving she, here, here, enskyed
To guard. It is God's will.

Here in the old sweet home where, still
A guardian spirit, she
Heals, comforts, counsels, and performs
Her angel ministry.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Butterfly and Honey-Bee

Who painted thy wings for a vision, a pageant of summer,
Butterfly gay ?

Who made thee, thou hovering silence for ever at play ?
The bee, that dainty hummer,

Sings at his trade, his task, in the blossoms of May
Sober in yellow and black, a labourer surly,
His song is earnest to mind us of winter's dark day,—
Never a moment to lose, but late and early

Honey to make, live sweetness, is all his care
But thou that effortless floatest on Zephyr's commotion,
Butterfly fair,

Who made thee to paint our eyes with the music of
motion,
Idle, disdainfully gorgeous, a pageant of air ?

He who the labouring bee made social and busy,
Butterfly bright!

Made thee a show and a picture in toil's despite
Thou of the wing's back dizzy

Lovely dancer, makest thy scorn and delight,
From flower to shaken flower thou quivering feedest,
With warmth art drunken, with sunshine, this glory of
light.

Thou of dark days no forethought takest, nought
heedest,

Save for honey to rock the jonquil, the harebell tease,
Who made thee in sorrow's derision a pulse-beat of
pleasure,

Flower of the breeze ?
To flaunt thy beauty and float, all pastime, all leisure,
As joy, thought, life were eternal and could not cease.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Ah, he works for the hive, a murmuring nation,
The grave honey-bee,
Earnest, absorbed and tasked and sombre is he.
The straight line without elation,
Humming he goes from wallflower to peony ,
Honey he makes for others, his life is duty
But thou, what secret of joy that buoyancy free
Gave, that reckless disdain of all but beauty ?
Only thy mate in the blossoms to chase and to kiss !
Ah, it is love, it is love, that gives thee thy valiance
Of fluttering bliss,
Ever to ride the sunshine triumphant in dalliance,
Sorrow and death and winter forever to miss

He who made so solemn the sky and the mountains,
All things that stand
Founded and fixed everlasting, unspeakably grand,
He who the fields, fresh fountains
Framed, and the haughty expanses of sea and land,
He who the pensive night made, mystical, balmy,
Steal down over earth and the silence spanned,
Made in heaven the stars his inscrutable army
Shining, the ancient stars, our ignorance wall,—
He painted thy wings for a signboard, a festival vision,
Butterfly small,
To win and banquet our eyes in sorrow's derision,
Showed in thy joy his secret, the key to it all

In joy, in joy he works , and we, his creatures,—
Bee, butterfly, man,—
Share his brooding bliss in varying span ,
All we, but features

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Of the prime Love divine, blazon his plan.
Not without joy he gathers, the luscious recruiter,
Honey ambrosial, yellow, 'gainst winter's ban :
Not without love is he though sexless, a neuter,
Nectar to hoard for others, the bee-hive's slave
Such deep strength of duty, affection sober,
Honey-bee brave,
Prescient of falling leaves and rainy October,
Spark of his own world-love to these he gave.

I, like the toiling bee, I too, a poet,
From flower to flower,
Gather delicious honey, my thought's rich dower,
For time to show it ;
Hive in the hearts of men 'gainst winter's power ;
To feed the world's deep thought I ply my earnest
Social labour. But, oh, like thee to tower
Up on the blast unanxious, thou fire that burnest
In love and gaiety up all dread of cold !
Love and the moment are thine. Thou lover immortal,
Butterfly bold !
Hast learnt to dream away through the ice-king's portal,
Hoarfrost and sleet and snow, in a brown shell rolled.

Fearless a worm thou cam'st from the primal rapture,
When Chaos, Night,
Were not, for God had spoken " Let there be light."
Thou, but a worm, did'st capture
Then thy knowledge mysterious and sovereign delight ;
Winter and night thou knewest to be for a season,
Night but anchors for thee thy argosy bright,
Moors thee till morn shall come. And winter hath
reason ;

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Gives thee a brooding-time in thy gold brbwn lair
There those wonderful sails in a dream thou weavest,
 Ship of the air,
Provident thou of joy, such lightness thievest
To float upon breeze and distance, disdainful of care.

Never a fear thou knowest Thy sister vessel,
 Gallant and fine,
Is she not with thee? I weep, "Had I but mine!"
 My sighs to wrestle,
Frigate of joy and beauty that mockest tear-shine,
Thou in a lovely swerve by me dost hover,
Angel of His compassion, His ship of the line,
And thy far-winged hail dost fling me: "Lover,
Weep not! She sucks the honey of endless joy
On God's side of the sunshine, where life is laughter,—
 Thy heart upbuoy!
She sips in the rose of glory. Come, follow after;
May, June, are there eternal and never can cloy."

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Black Swallow-tail Butterfly

Beautiful dancer upon the wind of the life in thy flutter-
ing wings,

O mingle of breeze and sunlight, whose glancing gaiety
sings

Of the heavenly life, and my soul on the verge of in-
visible things!

Heavy but now I wandered my garden of melancholy.
Sad as a clod was my heart and meaningless, trivial, a
folly

Past speaking, earth and sky and water and winds at
volley,

Left lonely of thee, the light of the air, with thy presence
unillumed,

Cold was the sunlight's glory, as dawn had perished
unbloomed.

A mournful pall was the day and all things in darkness
entombed.

Mute of thy voice an echo, an echo despairing and
hollow.

Sound but seemed in thy tones, thou life of music to
follow,

Beauty, whose warm sun thou wast, had after thee gone
like a swallow.

Dead was the beautiful shiver of leaves, and the lovely
swaying of flowers;

Dead without pride man's beauty, his motion, the some-
thing that towers

Like a dead leaf I drifted, a dream in the noontide hours.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

She has taken with her the rustle, the movement and
the shimmer,
The glide and the dart of birds and the woodland's
dusking glimmer :
Life was the ripple of her, the fire in things turns
dimmer.

For she was the charm and the mystery, the magic of it
all,
Earth's secret soul of delight : She is gone beyond recall !
And autumn demurs to linger and wanes and crisps to
the fall.

Only of her deserted, the sole thing left unwilling,
Behind her I hesitate, some desolate fate fulfilling ,
In the yellowing fall I linger and wait for the winter's
chilling.

When shall I go too, and be housed in thy ashes' sym-
pathy,
With dust and silence entomb, this rusting anchor free,
Wreck and sunder, descend to the blissful nothing of
thee ?

For nothing, I think, but slumber awaits us there, nor a
vernal
Visiting wind shall reach us , a sleep, a silence eternal ;
Since nothing returns of thee, not a breath, not a hint
supernal.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Oh, could aught, if the soul survived, from my longing
hold thee apart,
To thy love's visiting sweetness should I not suddenly
start,
Leap to a ghost of thy grace and fold thee to my heart ?

As thus I spoke despairing, a beautiful apparition
Hovered and glanced in my path, a winged glory, a
vision
That mocked me on fluttering wings and held me up to
derision

Large black wings, I knew them once, streaked white
o'er the swallow-tail,
Wings on the air's wide ocean me, lonely voyager, hail.
Whence and whither, O frigate of beauty crowded with
sail ?

Once or twice I have seen thee, a flash, for a moment
hover
On a gust of thy buoyant reserve, and ere my heart
could recover
That shock of enchanted surprise, the vision, the glory
was over.

But now before me undismayed, as if something should
restrain
That shy proud fear of my presence to hover away in
disdain,
Fluttering close I saw thee, thou 'sail of the distance,
remain.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Breathless I stood and fearful, in my wonder softly
enchanted

To and fro it fluttered to the flower-bush she had planted,
The flower called King of Fragrance with her holy
memory haunted

To and fro and back again! The beautiful life of its
wings

Shook out my crumpled soul : wild thinkings, imaginings,
Stirred delighted and conscious from a yearning black-
ness of things

My spirit, wintering sadly in a brown despair of nature,
Stirred in its dream of death, shook off its eyeless dis-
feature,

In a fluttering sympathy woke and danced with that
beautiful creature

In and out of the branches green, then down it fluttered
aswoon

To sit on the fern Himalayan, outspread reposing, but
soon

Held its large black wings to the languid afternoon.

That flaunting plume of verdure her own white hands had
planted :

There it sat, nor stirred. What magic wand had en-
chanted

The splendour on wings to sit where her holy memory
haunted ?

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Oh, could it know my dark despair ? as an angel of pity
have come,
That glory of breeze and distance, with my heavy heart
to home,
As a blessed sign of her presence to lift the pall from the
tomb ?

Sombre and melancholy, yet fretted with silver, 'tis
sitting,
One streak of hope, all else with my own black sorrow
fitting,
Upshut, scarce visible, not a stir, not a dream of flitting

In a soft wonder hushed I stood—a trance, a stupor of
awe.
With my whole soul I was seeing, through the pores of
my body I saw,
And felt my frost-bound spirit to her sunny presence
thaw.

Life re-woke, stir, motion. An unforgettable sweetness
Hovered and fluttered within to my pulses' newborn
fleetness
Without me the world had winged from a trance of
incompleteness.

For she, the charm and the mystery, the magic of it all,
Earth's secret soul of delight, she had touched the
yellowing fall
With rustle and movement and shimmer ; she had come
back at a call :

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Sound and sunshine and beauty at a touch; an admoni-
tion
Had burst their chrysalis sleep At that glory, that
apparition,
Life, the ripple of her, emerged, a newborn vision,

Vivid, immortal, airy, a wondrous vision on wings!
Elate and cumberless, the fire that smouldered in things
Burnt up with her from ashes to be the silence that sings,

The floating flower in the air that dances for ever vernal,
All wings, a bodiless flutter, the symbol of life eternal,
A mingle of breeze and sunshine, glad Psyche, the
winger supernal.

Scarcely alighting ever from flower to shaken flower,
On quivering wings she feeds, or if she rests, for an hour
Will sit in utter repose in the stirlessness of power.

For she is the soul's own sister: and life but a sweet
emotion,
Like her, a pulsing thought, through the bliss of things,
the ocean,
Hovers, of being and beauty, or quiverless rests from
motion.

You, too, rest, O my dead love, upon wings immortal
alit
Here in the old sweet garden that was our life, to sit
Invisible, folded up, you cannot and will not flit

ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Till the breeze that is God and morning awake us to
soar together
Through other gardens of unknown time and God's
eternal weather,
Since life is the soul's vast voyage and death but a
moment's tether.

Unalighting, lost in repose, the glorious worlds that
roll,—
Each and all I saw in a flash to a wingèd thing ensoul
Our earth, too, a mothlike creature that hovers on either
pole

LATER LYRICS

LATER LYRICS

April

April delicious
Young, sunny maiden,
Arch, gusty, capricious,
With fresh flowers laden,
After dead winter long
Thrill us with sweet bird-song,
After dry March's drought,
Blow from thy rainy mouth !
Hasten to kiss us
With the fresh daffodil
Through and through golden !
On green bank, by every rill
Pale cowslips embolden,
And white narcissus
Make o'er his dreaming pool
His wan face beautiful
Hang like a lover
Set for the honey-bees
Budding anemones
And pink white clover.
Now on the greening leas
Hasten, oh hasten up,
In yellow companies
The laughing buttercup,
And to the meadow-pomp
Lure, lure the children out.
In mad crowds with merry shout
To pull them, dance, and romp
By their glad nurses.

LATER LYRICS

And fresh green sights to woo,

Thy lovely face to view

Lure, lure the poet too,

Humming his verses !

I will not praise thee, April, if thou spare

Of all thy stormy freshness, one slant shower

To take the grey east from the shrinking air

And slake the wind-choked miserable parch

Of a bleak world that trembles out of March.

I will not sing of thee unless thou flower

Millions of daisies, hour by sunlit hour,

To jewel the simple grass out of the skies

With less cold, nearer stars, and make earth paradise

Oh to be flowery,

Dripping and balmy,

Call up the showery

White clouds, an army !

Shallow and freshet flush

Green as the grasses lush ;

By shady soft degrees

Thicken the leafy trees

To reach out dreamily

Wall and lane over,

Till in fresh groves are heard,

In the green clover,

Warbling their lays each bird

Over and over.

Curd wild brooks creamily ;

Let not the bulrush lag,

Quicken the flowering flag,

Till in reeds stilly

LATER LYRICS

Soon the wild swan shall nest

Preening his dazzling breast

By the oped lily.

Make listening echo sweet

By the full waterfall,

Dimly and oft repeat

The haunting cuckoo-call

With all that shady is

Hasten to bower the land!

Elm, oak, and tall beech grand

Of dim isles that lady is

Where greenness shall hover,

And where a tall thin mist

Rises, the green wheat whist,

Chatters the crake ; make tryst

Fond lass and lover!

Haste, April, upon city streets to blow

Thy purest, warmest breezes ; fly beneath

The flower-girl's rags, poor beggary's basket stow

With lordliest gold of daffodils aglow.

I will not love thee, save with sighing breath

On pale, worn cheeks thou waft reprieve of death.

Come in a wash of fragrance, let sick eyes

See leaves bud, bird-song hear through windowed
paradise

LATER LYRICS

Baby

Baby dear! and shall we sever?
All your own
Mother is, and yours alone.
Father goes, he cares not, he;
Comes and now from other shores,
Baby dear, your deity
Woos he and adores.
Never heed him! he was never
Yours!

My one bliss, and would you lonely
Leave my heart,
Thus from mother's lap to part?
O what is it, charm of charms,
Seek your lips incarnadine,
Stretching forth your little arms
With that cry divine?
Enchantment! oh, art thou not only
Mine?

Fret not so, nor tear my raiment;
Heed not thou,
Softly though he flatters now.
Woods nor whispers thinks she sweet,
Mother, to thy vague murmurs:
Men, the world, the roaring street
Father, he prefers.
Hers you are, 'gainst every claimant
Hers!

LATER LYRICS

Leave him! Not a kiss deserves he,
Lonely here
To forsake us, baby dear.
Oils and troubles, all the week,
They possess him, toils like tares.
For the rose of baby's cheek
Not a thought he cares
'Tis for them his heart preserves he
Theirs!

Laughing, see, has baby known him,
With small hands,
Stretching out, his beard demands.
Oh, his flattery well I know
Sweet he comes as April showers.
Wait, poor prattler, he will go
False as April flowers.
No! my joy, we cannot own him
Ours!

From his arms to keep you? Never!
Baby dear,
From his arms, your native sphere,
Home from labour comes he tired.
You and I, his only bliss,
Crown him, crown our king desired.
To adore and kiss,
You and I, his slaves forever—
His!

LATER LYRICS

A Lullaby

Hush, my darling, sleep again !
Sleep, there's nothing here,
Nothing is my babe can fear ;—
Moonbeams, the still sleep, and I.
All things hushing now refrain ;
Not a cricket, not a mouse,
Not a sound in all the house.
What disturbs thee thus to cry ?
It is but a dream's unrest,
Little blossom,
Hush thee, hush on mother's breast,
Mother's bosom

Hark, the screech-owl, hooting near,
Hark, his charm supply
To my sleepy lullaby.
All things woo to his soft nest,
Baby, all themselves endear,
Darkness waiting to beguile,
Moonbeams seeking for his smile
Rest thee on thy cradle, rest,
Heaving softly, sweet and oft,
Sunset locking
This way, that way, goes the soft
Cradle rocking.

LATER LYRICS

Poplar, Beech, and Weeping Willow

1

Shapely poplar, shivering white, poplar like a maiden,
Thinking, musing softly here, so light and so unladen,
That with every breath and stir, perpetually you gladden,
Teach me your still secrecies of thought that never
sadden

From the heavy-hearted earth, earth of grief and passion,
Maiden, would you spring with me, and leave men's
lowly fashion,
Skyward lift with me your thoughts in cumberless
elation,
Every leaf and every shoot a virgin aspiration

The blue day, the floating clouds, the stars shall you for
palace
Proffer their cathedral pomp, dawn her rosy chalice
Where the birds are, you shall throng and revel to be
lonely
In the blue of heaven to spire and sway with breezes
only —

2

Beech, of leafy isles the queen, beech of trees the lady,
Soaring to a tower of sighs, in branches soft and shady,
You that sunward lift your strength, to make of shadow
duty,
Teach me, tree, your heavenly height, and earth-
remembering beauty.

LATER LYRICS

Maiden, would you soar like me, with day-upclouding
tresses,
Beauty into bounty change, bend down the eye that
blesses ,
Make from heaven a shelter cool, to shepherd and sheep
silly
Shadowing with shadiness, hot rose and fainting lily

Through your glorious heart of gloom, the noonday wind
awaking
In an ecstasy shall set swaying, blowing, shaking ;
Leafy branches, in their nests set the sweet birds rocking
Till their happy song break out, the noonday ardour
mocking.

8

Willow sweet, willow sad, willow by the river,
Taught by pensive love to droop, where ceaseless
waters shiver,
Teach me, steadfast sorrower, your mournful grace of
graces ;
Weeping to make beautiful the silent water-places.

Maiden, would you learn of me the loveliness of mourning,
Droop into the chill, wan wave, strength, hardness,
lofty scorning ;
Drench your drooping soul in tears, content to love and
languish ;
Gaze in sorrow's looking-glass, and see the face of
anguish.

LATER LYRICS

In the very wash of woe, as your bowed soul shall linger,
You shall touch the sheer, bright stars, and on the
moon set finger ;
You shall hear, where brooks have birth, the mountain-
pine's emotion,
Catch upon the broadening stream the sound and swell
of ocean

LATER LYRICS

Oak, Pine, and Silver Birch

1

Oak, whose mossed antiquity stands leafily ashiver,
Oldest oracles, each dawn, in earth's ear to deliver,
From your whispering world of leaves, peace, peace is all
your pæan ,
Give me of your giant calm, the secret Dodonæan

Boy, a gnarl'd root first strike deep in plain earth's
homely nature
Wrestle rude blasts, lift, like me, your storm-contorted
stature.

Sun, wind, rain, your thousand-ringed millennial girth
shall sacre,
Broad to fling a hundred arms and overshadow an acre.

You too vastly then, like me, tranquillity shall city,
Home the squirrel, bower for birds the million leaves of
pity,
Greenly mistletoe for man the soul's immortal mystery,
Journal in your bark God's day, a thousand years of
history.

2

Lonely Pine-tree on the hill, of gloom divinely solemn,
Who so tall and straight and sheer your crown of dark-
ness column,
Teach me, tree, your trance of strength majestically
sombre,
Gloom-worlds Atlas-like to prop nor dread but love to
umber.

LATER LYRICS

High above the deep sunk vale, and high, the rich flats
over

Learn, sweet boy, to brood like me, the lonely hillside's
lover

There, to all winds in your top, melodiously hearken ;
Let your soul gloom earnestly and to its own self darken

Brooding such a depth austere of gloom augustly tender,
Shall the waste bleak moors inspire the wide heath bathed
in splendour .

You the cone-topped thyrsus wave of ecstasy shall
borrow,

Blackening to its tragic core where thought outshadows
sorrow.

3

Breezy Birch, who make yourself a wind-shook swaying
glory,

Throw up open arms in joy to catch the day's bright
story,

Moonlight's ever silvery house,—all windows, ne'er a
rafter!—

Give me of your sun-drunk heart, this holy blanch of
laughter.

Boy, an athlete spare like me, the mountain's hardy
scholar,

Grow, profusion chastely curb, and rank luxuriance
collar,

Open out your boughs like mine to take the cold pure
breezes,

Every leaf a dancing gem that light's own laughter
leases.

LATER LYRICS

You like me shall toss your head in bacchanals of sun-
shine ;

Drink, nor melancholy be to quaff the charm of moon-
shine.

You on splendour's heart shall pour and every laughter
school in,

Silver bark, to drench in shine, leaf jollity to fool in.

LATER LYRICS

Autumn

By thy wave I linger,
 Silent stream!
Autumn's golden finger
 Paints thy dream

From the beeches falling
 Down thy face,
Summer, past recalling,
 Drifts apace.

Only mists rise stilly ;
 A sad peace!
Dank earth yields no lily ;
 Roses cease.

Here, where I sank lazy
 Deep in grass,
No surviving daisy
 Tells what was,—

Kingcup blaze of meadow,
 Cuckoo-call.
Is it all a shadow
 I recall ?

Yet when down these reaches,
 Swept, with cold,
Scarce the wintry beeches
 Durst be bold.

LATER LYRICS

Windy magic struck us,
March's rod ;
Like sun-beams the crocus
Burst the sod.

And when April after
Showered the ground,
Daffodils in laughter
Danced around.

Oh! the crimson story,—
White and red
May-blossoms in glory
Too soon shed!

Scarcely May-time closes,
Burning June
Brings me her musk roses
And her moon.

Blue skies to embolden,
Hot July
Amid cornfields golden
Oped an eye.

Last, for fancy's yearning
Thought to save,
Her frail poppy burning
August gave.

Spring-time's lovely story,
Summer's dream! —
Where is gone the glory ?
Silent stream!

LATER LYRICS

Calm thy current flowing
Ripples on,
Pang nor memory showing
For what's gone

Canst thou unregretful
Silent glide,
For no loved flower fretful,—
Flowers that die ?

For no sweet bird caring—
Birds that sang
Lost musicians, faring
With no pang ?

Memory's sunken anchor,
Yearns my heart
Rusts and rusts to hanker,
Grieves to part.

Thou the present only,
Car'st to glass,
Feel'st nor reft nor lonely
For what was

Art thou, solemn river,
Lethe's stream,
That there comes no shiver
O'er thy dream ?

Autumn melancholy
Mourns with me
Summer's spendthrift folly,
Spring-time's glee.

LATER LYRICS

Gorgeous, trustful, tender
Autumn sighs,
Grieving to surrender
Pomp that dies.

Gone are all the glories.
Autumn, speak!
Where for what no more is
Shall we seek ?

Now in falling splendour
Every leaf
Fills the heart with tender
Wistful grief.

Now with mists September
Mournful is,
Sadly to remember
July's kiss.

Soon October stormy
Shall with rain
Through the bare trees o'er me
Weep again,

And November chilly
Brown leaves heap
For the dead year's stilly
Winter sleep.

LATER LYRICS

Song of Britannia

Muse, who art quick to fire
At the least noble thing,
And frankest praise to bring
Upon the quivering lyre,
Why art thou slow to sing
Now, when the world beclouds
With battle such as shrouds
Earth in a mist of tears ?
For want of heart belike,
While thunder sings afar,
And even the bravest fears.
Seek'st thou a theme for song,
No fear can ever wrong,
No tears can tarnish—strike,
And sing Britannia

Britannia the fair,
Whom oceans girdle round
With hill and valley crowned
And purest wash of air
From her Atlantic bound,
What heaths so fresh as hers
With blossom ? And how stirs
The soft wind in her pines !
Earth's fairest isle, 'tis said,
Where all things lovely are ;
Yet beauty there not mines
Strength, for no cliff is there,
No headland calmly fair
But fringed with wild spray wed
To shout Britannia.

LATER LYRICS

Britannia the strong,
Whom God designed should queen
The ocean plain serene,
Though threatening foes bethrong,
Whose fate shall not be long,
While round her, every deck
Bristling with cannon, speck
The seas her angry fleet
Not earth to dominate,
Nor to embroil with war,
Tower they : 'tis to keep sweet
The world's dear peace, they bulk
So with their silent hulk
In all eyes power, elate
To speak Britannia.

Britannia the free,
Of soil so virtuous, such
No foot of slave can touch
But walks at liberty ,
The staff she is, the crutch
By whom weak lands arise,
Who, nourished in her eyes,
Grow and shake off the sloth
Of old anarchic power.
Two richly tokens are
Of her boon influence both.
What man of Ind or Nile
That sees his fat fields smile,
But his lips burst aflower
To praise Britannia ?

LATER LYRICS

Britannia the sage,
 With her own history wise !
 The stars were her allies
To write that ample page
 'Twas her adventurous eyes
The vantage saw, whence she
To this wide regency
 Through acts adventurous won ,
And if from strife and jar
 She keep, the secret learn
 From her mild brow alone
How not the world to daunt
Or power imperial flaunt ,
 She makes the queen'd earth yearn
To serve Britannia

Britannia the good,
 With her own heart at school,
 Whom flatterer cannot fool
Nor rebels sour, at flood
 Her own strength taught to rule.
Hers are the mighty hands
Which o'er a hundred lands
 Weave good from dawn to grey ,
Like fond words from afar
 Hers are the wingèd sails
 O'er ocean, words are they
Which in a moment bring
 Her broqd beneath her wing ;
 And none so small that fails
To knit Britannia

LATER LYRICS

Britannia wide flung
Over the globe, its half
Her children, whether graff
Or scion mother-sprung
Sons, now to be her staff
When her path glooms, though Rhine,
Danube, and Elbe combine,
Of these, O idlest dream!
To reave her Hers they are,
Roused ardent in her right
From Ganges utmost stream
Far as Canadian firs
And bush Australian, hers
Joined now in Hell's despite
To help Britannia

Britannia, the heart
And brain, which bulwarks power,
See at the crucial hour
How well she bears her part!
From fields how peaceful flower
In millions, arms and men,
Which now she pours again
To those old battle fields,
France, Flanders, makes her star
Of glory, that she shields
The weak, confronts the strong
Brute force let us others sing,
She shows in everything
To her it shall belong
To be——Britannia

LATER LYRICS

Britannia sublime,
 To flame in generous deed,
 In others' cause to bleed !
So to the end of time
 It shall be Once she freed
The Iberian , Wellington
And Torres Vedras spun
 The lines of victory then :
Another Trafalgar
 The bleak north seas await,
 Where her fleet towers the main,
Each mighty battleship
Charged to the very lip
 With thunder. Big with fate
 They loom, Britannia

1916

LATER LYRICS

On the Centenary of the Presidency College

A hundred years! The very phrase
Unsealtures the million'd dead ;
Three generations in that space,
Ghosts of the past, have breathed and fled
Time shakes his hour-glass, and we slide,
We running human sands, away ,
Vain, individual atoms,—glide
From name and memory But the play
Of his chance-reaping scythe stops here :
Our frail race flowers upon its bier,
Man, feeble man, who from his dark
Gets no more, can no more endear
To the stern harvester his year,
Than soaring eagle feels a spark
Of the eternal burn in him Some ark
That may survive the flood of things
He fashions , not for what so flies
His brief self, but that children's eyes
May see, and children's children, builds
In the void future There on wings
Indignant Immortality
Lends him, in that abysm of time,
Where no sure certainty can climb,
He fledges his sheer hope ; where sings
Some torrent his lone fancy gilds
In mists, the everlasting snows
Above him, nests his brave repose,
High-eyried in posterity

LATER LYRICS

So thought, so toil'd, so built the men
Our founders whom to-day we laud,
Commemorate, from now to then
Over a hundred years applaud
To the true-hearted Britons praise !
Those three ! from law and church who rose
And shop, this lasting fane to raise
For the lov'd Muses, verse and prose,
Thought, science, numbers : to enshrine
Fair Learning's self, the lamp divine
In God's hand for mortality
To see by Gulf of " mine " and " thine,"
Though come from o'er the bitter brine,
They knew not, no dividing sea
In race, pride, alien ancestry,
That with such cold estranging wave
Makes severance of us ; through our blood
Howls against human brotherhood ,
Than towering Himalaya more
Parts land from land , as in a grave
Buries mankind's growth, to congeal
In icy barrier which with ease
They leap'd Nor could caste, custom freeze
Their fiery souls, those two, our brave,
Our native founders, who both bore
The name, and the large heart of kings
To them, while all the patriot springs
To our lips, let the heart's thanks peal.
For they saw, those far-sighting five,
Or, dim-divining, surely felt
Shakespeare in Kalidasa thrive
In Bhababhuti Milton melt

LATER LYRICS

Through creed, race, colour they saw kin,
The bleeding ransom Calvary's tree
Shed for us, and what under this
Tathagata's thought-agony
Dropped in the dreaming bo-leaf shade
At Gaya. And as, never to fade,
What they in man's adoring soul
Hope, rapture, worship built, they made,
Those Heavenly Founders, one and whole
Like some cathedral's vault to roll,
Or God's blue, o'er humanity
For all to breathe in : so divined
Ours, building earthlier, that mind,
Like soul (that catholic lesson) is
For all men , spreads like empire free
This glorious fabric she uprears,
Britannia. Under the third George
When she pent Europe's splendid scourge
In Helena, they, rapt to see,
Prophets, the large imperial bliss
To be now, when earth's peace is spilt
By a worse madman, rose and built
This structure of a hundred years.

Calcutta, 1917

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